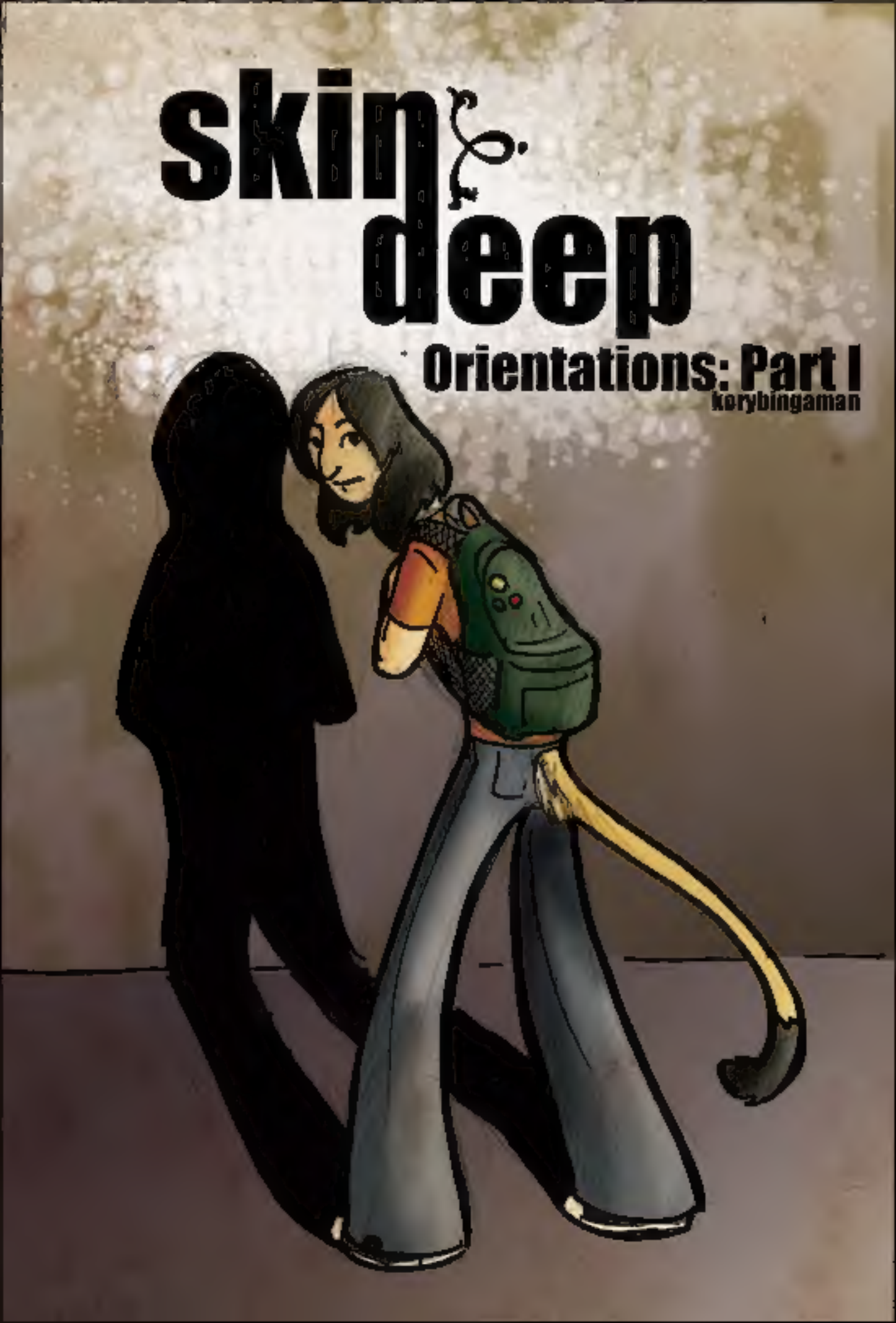
skin deep

Orientations: Part I

korybingaman

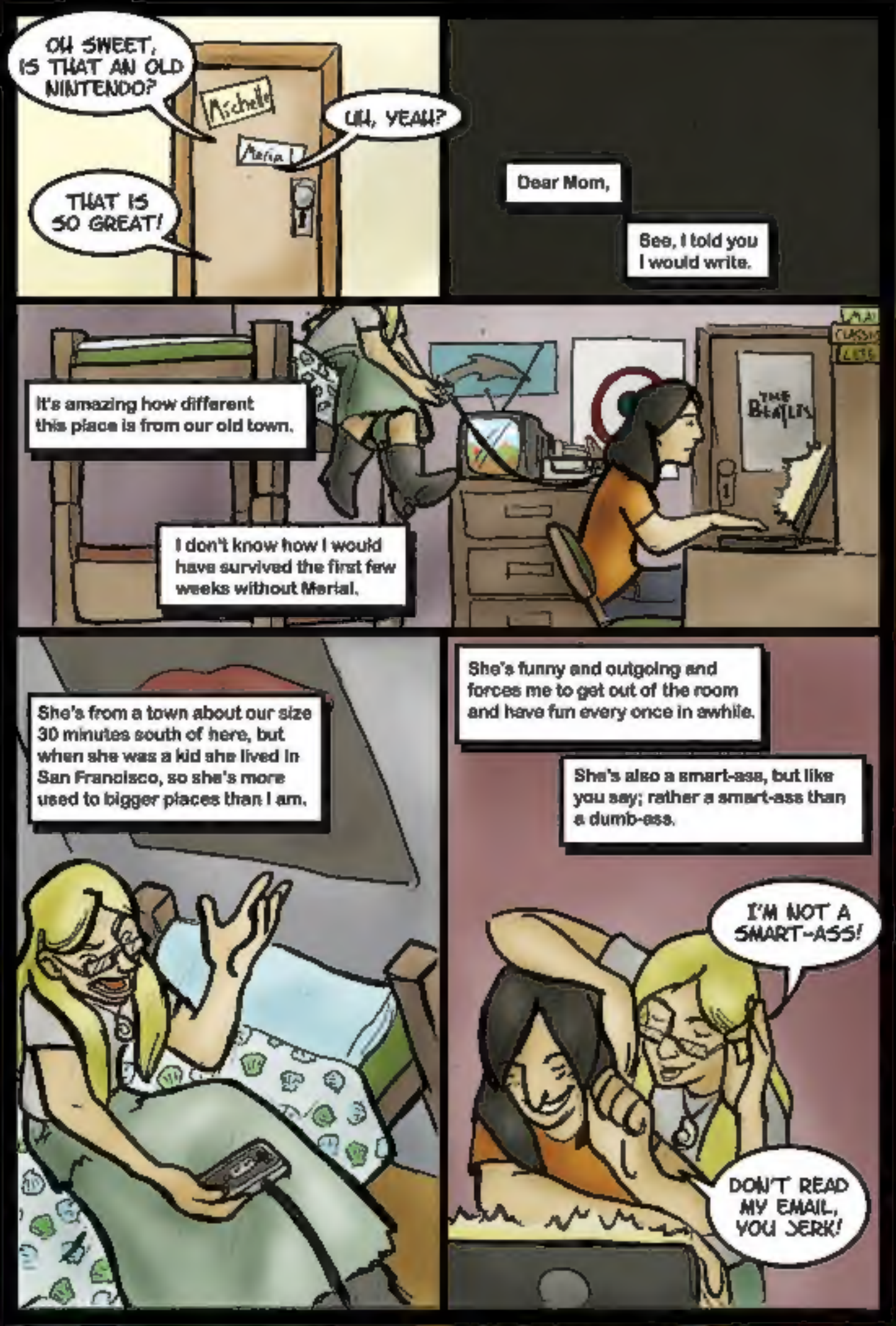


AUGUST, 2004
IS THIS THE LAST OF IT?
Michel
CRA
YEAH, THANKS, MOM.
GUESS YOUR ROOMMATE HASN'T SHOWN UP YET, HUH?
NO, I GOT HERE FIRST.
ARE YOU OKAY? YOU LOOK A LITTLE DOWN.
I'M FINE...

JUST A LITTLE NERVOUS I GUESS. THERE'RE SO MANY PEOPLE. I DON'T KNOW IF I'LL MAKE ANY FRIENDS.
OF COURSE YOU'LL MAKE FRIENDS, MICHELLE. YOU'RE A BRIGHT, FUNNY GIRL. IN FACT, I BET YOU'LL MAKE SO MANY FRIENDS YOU WON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO WITH YOURSELF.
I DIDN'T HAVE ANY BACK IN HIGH SCHOOL, WHAT MAKES YOU THINK I'LL HAVE ANY HERE?
YOU KNOW HOW MUCH I LOVE OUR LITTLE TOWN, BUT AS FAR AS A VARIETY OF PEOPLE GOES YOU DIDN'T HAVE MUCH TO CHOOSE FROM.
THERE ARE 20,000 PEOPLE ON THIS CAMPUS. I'M SURE YOU CAN FIND AT LEAST ONE PERSON IN THIS COLLEGE THAT YOU HAVE SOMETHING IN COMMON WITH.
DON'T WORRY SO MUCH. YOU'LL BE FINE. OKAY?
OKAY.
I'M SERIOUS. YOU'LL FIND YOUR CALLING HERE. THESE ARE GOING TO BE SOME OF GREATEST YEARS OF YOUR LIFE.
YOU'RE GOING TO GROW AND CHANGE AND BECOME A WONDERFUL PERSON HERE. TRUST ME, I'M YOUR MOTHER.
HEH, THANKS MOM.

WELL, I BETTER HEAD BACK IF I WANT TO GET HOME BEFORE YOUR GRANDMOTHER GOES INSANE FROM TALKING TO THE DOG ALL DAY..
I HAVE FAITH IN YOU, MICHELLE.
THANKS AGAIN. AND THANKS FOR HELPING ME MOVE IN, HAVE A SAFE DRIVE BACK.
CALL SOMETIME!
I WILL!
I MEAN IT, LADY!
LOVE YOU TOO, BYE!
LATER...
THERE, I THINK I'M DONE UNPACKING!
HOO WHEE!
SLAM!

MAN! AM I GLAD TO UNLOAD ALL OF THIS CRAP!
HI! YOU MUST BE MICHELLE.
MEE-SHELL, ACTUALLY. MY PARENTS WERE WEIRD.
LIKE THE BEATLES SONG!
I GUESS?
SO... YOU'RE MERIAL?
SURE AM!
SURE AM...
WANNA BUNK THE BEDS!?
WHAT? UH..SURE?
GREAT.


OH SWEET, IS THAT AN OLD NINTENDO?
Michelle
Maria
UH, YEAH?
THAT IS SO GREAT!
Dear Mom,
See, I told you I would write.
It's amazing how different this place is from our old town.
I don't know how I would have survived the first few weeks without Maria.
THE BEATLES
She's from a town about our size 30 minutes south of here, but when she was a kid she lived in San Francisco, so she's more used to bigger places than I am.
She's funny and outgoing and forces me to get out of the room and have fun every once in awhile.
She's also a smart-ass, but like you say; rather a smart-ass than a dumb-ass.
I'M NOT A SMART-ASS!
DON'T READ MY EMAIL, YOU JERK!

I have a couple other friends, too. I met them through Merial, of course.
Yeah, I know. Three friends? Who is this strange person and what has she done with your daughter?
Jim is an international student from England (Liverpool, I think he said. Or maybe London, I can't remember). Merial met him at orientation, and they hit it off real well.
He's even more eccentric than Merial.
...which I didn't think was possible.
We had a two hour conversation about the NinjaTurtles once. A serious conversation.
You can't really miss him in a crowd. He's seven feet tall and has waist-length forest green hair.
He swears up and down that it's his real hair color, but how is that even possible?
It's so hard to tell when he's joking or not. I guess I'll figure out the truth sooner or later.

Now Greg is a different story altogether. Merial's known him since High School, but he's nothing like her.
I wonder how they became friends?
He's shy, soft spoken, and prefers to stay in the background while Jim and Merial attract all the attention.
He's quiet, but he's a total sweetheart. I've never met anyone so devoted to making other people happy.
He bought me ice cream once when I was having a really bad day. I don't want to hear any of your sarcasm, Mom.
He always wears this dumb stocking cap, even though it's summer. I've tried asking about it a couple times, but he always gets flustered and changes the subject.
Actually, it's hard to get him to talk about anything.

MATH
Well, It's getting late, so I better wrap this up and go to bed.
Tomorrow I'm going to go downtown. There's a couple antique stores down there.
You know how I am with old things. It's a weakness. I can't help it.
I'll talk to you later! Love you!
Michelle.
BAR

UH, SIR?

SIR?
WEIRD CREEPY CLOAKED GUY?
UH, SIR?
WHO WEARS A CLOAK?
I MEAN SERIOUSLY

Michelle
Holly
Dear Michelle
Sorry I Missed ya!
I went home for
the weekend
See ya on Monday
~Meria
PS-Try not to spe
allweekend on the
computer. Goal
HMM?
SSSSSSSSSSS

sssssssssshhhhhhhhhhHHHHHHHHHHH
...
sssssssssshhhhhhhhhh
WHAT THE CRAP?
WHAT THE CRAP!?

Michelle

My belle

these are words that go together well

my michel e
UGHHHHHH
UGHHH, WHAT THE CRAP.
MY HEAD...

AHHHHHHHHHHH!!!
AHHH!!
WHAT!? I DON'T- HOW!?
NOT RIGHT NOT RIGHT NOT RIGHT!!

WHAT THE CRAP IS THI-
OOOPHH!!
THUNK!
OKAY OKAY OKAY CALM DOWN. I'M SURE THERE'S A PERFECTLY RATIONAL EXPLANATION FOR THIS.
AND THAT EXPLANATION WOULD BE...
THAT THIS IS OBVIOUSLY SOME WHACKED OUT DREAM.

YOU REMEMBER, RIGHT? YOU WERE IN YOUR ROOM.
YOU PASSED OUT AND NOW YOU'RE DREAMING.
AND INSTEAD OF YOUR TEETH FALLING OUT YOU'RE DREAMING ABOUT BEING A FREAKY CAT/BIRD MONSTER IN THE MIDDLE OF, UM...
WHERE THE HELL AM I?
CRACK!
WHO'S THERE!?

CRACK
HELLO?
WHO'S THERE?
CRACK
TSH
TSH
TSH
NO, WAIT!
TSH
PLEASE WAIT!
CRUNCH

PLEASE STOP! I'M NOT GOING TO HURT YOU!
CRUNCH CRUNCH CRUNCH
TSK TSK TSK
I NEED HELP, PLEASE!
THANK YOU...
PANT
GASP
NOW PLEASE, WHO ARE...
...YOU?

Next Issue: Missouri folktales attack and Michelle says "What the Crap" a couple times probably.

Special guest appearance by Greg's Hat

Stay Tuned! Orientations Part III starts Tuesday, May 22nd!

skin deep

Orientations Part II

KORY BINGAMAN

GREG!?
MICHELLE?
GREG? ARE YOU OKAY?
WELL I DIDN'T KNOW YOU WERE-
WHAT THE CRAP ARE YOU SUPPOSED TO BE?

WE THOUGHT WE HEARD SOMEONE WITH YOU-
MICHELLE!?
MERIAL?
JIM!?
BLOODY WELL, GIRL, IF WE HAD KNOWN WE WOULD HAVE INVITED YOU DOWN HERE WITH-
NNGGG.
-US?
WHUMP

I need to I need to I need to.

I need to make you see

D...DAD ?
HEY SHE'S WAKING UP!
ABOUT TIME!
NGG. GREG? WHERE AM I?
WHAT THE CRAP!? STOP IT ALREADY! STOP IT!

MICHELLE! CALM DOWN, CALM DOWN, IT'S OKAY!
GREG? WHAT? I DON'T-
I WOKE UP BUT THE DREAM DIDN'T-
-AND YOU GUYS ARE-
WHAT'S GOING ON?
YOU DON'T KNOW?
DOES IT LOOK LIKE I KNOW?
I THINK SHE JUST TURNED.
YOU THINK THAT'S WHAT WE FELT IN THE WOODS?
MAYBE.

WHERE'D YOU GET THAT MEDALLION?
WHAT DOES THAT HAVE TO DO WITH ANYTHING?
IT HAS EVERYTHING TO DO WITH EVERYTHING. WHERE'D YOU GET IT?
SOME CREEPY CLOAKED DUDE DROPPED IT
HOW DOES THAT EXPLAIN WHY YOU'RE ALL FREAKY MONSTERS?
THERE ARE COUNTLESS STORIES ABOUT CREATURES THAT 'DON'T EXIST.'
DIG THIS, RIGHT?
ALL OVER FOLKLORE AND MYTHOLOGY YOU FIND DRAGONS, SEA SERPENTS, GHOSTS...
NESSIE, MERMAIDS, BIGFOOT, THE CHUPACABRA...
DID YOU THINK PEOPLE JUST MADE THOSE UP FOR FUN?

I NEVER THOUGHT ABOUT IT.
WHY WOULD I THINK ABOUT THAT?
YOU'RE SAYING THAT'S ALL REAL?
ASKS THE BIRD-LION-GIRL.
MY LIFE HAS GONE FROM "ALRIGHT" TO "CRAPPY FANTASY FANFIC" IN THREE HOURS.
CUT ME SOME DAMN SLACK.
GO ON WITH YOUR LITTLE STORY
THANK YOU.
YES, THE STORIES ARE TRUE.
WELL, TRUE/SH.
I'M A GRYPHON.
-MERIAL'S A NIXIE-
A WHAT?
MERMAID-Y THING
AND GREG HERE IS OF COURSE A SATYR.
HI

OF COURSE. A SATYR.
AND THAT WOULD MAKE ME WHAT NOW?
WELL, I'VE NEVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE YOU BEFORE.
WELL THERE'S NO END TO THE GOOD NEWS, IS THERE?
SHE LOOKS LIKE A SPHINX TO ME.
A SPHINX? LIKE THE BIG STONE THING IN EGYPT?
KIND OF.
IN OEDIPUS REX THERE'S A CREATURE CALLED THE SPHINX.

SHE GUARDED THE ENTRANCE TO THEBES AND DEVOURED ALL WHO COULD NOT SOLVE HER RIDDLE.
SPHINXES HAVE BEEN EXTINCT FOR CENTURIES.
SHE HAS TO BE SOMETHING ELSE.
LOVELY
SO IF ALL THESE MONSTERS EXIST WHY HAVE I NEVER SEEN ANY BEFORE?
THAT NECKLACE IT CASTS AN ILLUSION OF HUMANITY
BUT I'M ALREADY HUMAN.
NO, YOU WERE BORN HUMAN
WITH A MEDALLION WE CAN LIVE COMPLETELY AS A HUMAN
nemean Lion
medallion
false Human
false Human
normal Human
unassisted false Human
IF YOU HAVE CHILDREN. THE SPELL THAT KEEPS YOU LOOKING HUMAN TRANSFERS TO THE KID, DISGUISING THEM WITHOUT HELP

THAT SPELL CAN BE BROKEN IF THE CHILD IS GIVEN A MEDALLION.
1523
1889
1964
1994
OTHERWISE THE KID CAN LIVE COMPLETELY AS A HUMAN, DISGUISED WITH THE PARENT'S SPELL.
THIS SPELL WILL STAY INTACT OVER TIME, AND IF THEY DON'T KNOW WHAT THEY ARE, THE LINE IS ESSENTIALLY LOST.
.....
HOW DOES THAT EVEN WORK?
IT'S MAGIC.
NOW, LISTEN UP, THIS IS IMPORTANT
GOOD LORD LOOK AT MY FREAKIN' NECK.
NO MATTER HOW THIN THE BLOODLINE IS, IF THEY'RE GIVEN THE RIGHT MEDALLION THE OLD SPELL WILL BREAK AND THEY'LL TURN BACK INTO THEIR NATURAL SHAPE.

THAT'S CALLED A 'TURNING', SEE?
RIGHT
MERIAL?
EXPLAIN?
YOUR ANCESTOR SPHINX
HIDDEN SPHINX
CHILDREN UNKNOWN SPHINX
TIME
YOU
AMULET
YOU HAD A RELATIVE THAT WAS A SPHINX, OR WHAT-EVER YOU ARE, WHO HID AS A HUMAN WITH A SPELL. THAT SPELL WAS PASSED ON TO YOU, BUT BROKE WHEN YOU TOUCHED THAT NECKLACE.
EASY AS PIE.
OH
SPELL BREAKS
HOLY CRAP
REAL FORM

SO, WHAT, DOES THAT MEAN THIS CRAP HAPPENED TO YOU GUYS, TOO?
I TURNED WHEN I WAS ELEVEN LET'S JUST SAY MY PARENTS DIDN'T TAKE IT VERY WELL.
MY GRANDFATHER GAVE ME HIS MEDALLION RIGHT BEFORE HE DIED. HE HAD KEPT IT A SECRET UNTIL THEN
I, HOWEVER, AM A GRYPHON, BORN AND RAISED
THE FINNS--THAT'S MY FAMILY, THE FINNS--ARE ONE OF THE OLDEST AND MOST DISTINGUISHED GRYPHON CLANS IN THE WORLD
HE'S VERY PROUD OF THAT
I'M VERY PROUD OF THAT
MARVY SO IF SPHINXES ARE SUPPOSED TO BE EXTINCT WHY AM I HERE?

WELL, WHEN WE WERE KIDS ME PARENTS USED TO TELL US A BEDTIME STORY ABOUT THE GREAT WAR
I ALWAYS FIGURED IT WAS JUST A FIB TO MAKE THE STORY HAPPIER
THERE WAS ALWAYS A FAMILY OF SPHINX THAT ESCAPED THE EXTINCTION AND HID AMONG THE HUMANS.
'THE GREAT WAR'?
DID I SKIP OVER THAT?
THAT'S WHY SPHINXES AND DRAGONS ARE EXTINCT
THEY WAGED A TERRIBLE WAR UPON EACH OTHER DURING THE MIDDLE AGES AND WIPED THEMSELVES OUT
WHAT? WHY?
OH, THEY REALLY HATED EACH OTHER.
THE SPHINXES WERE A REALLY POWERFUL RACE, AND THE DRAGONS WERE JEALOUS.

THE MORAL TAUGHT THE IMPORTANCE OF TOLERANCE AND HOW JEALOUSY DESTROYS ALL IT TOUCHES
WHAT A WONDERFUL STORY
SO, LET'S SEE IF I HAVE THIS STRAIGHT.
YA'LL ARE THESE CRAZY MONSTER THINGS AND THERE'S A WHOLE SECRET CULTURE OF CRAZY MONSTER THINGS THAT NORMAL PEOPLE DON'T KNOW ABOUT
AND I'M A CRAZY MONSTER THING AND ALWAYS HAVE BEEN A CRAZY MONSTER THING EXCEPT THAT I'VE BEEN UNDER A SPELL THAT KEPT ME NORMAL UNTIL I HELD AN UGLY PIECE OF METAL THAT SOME GUY IN A CLOAK DROPPED IN FRONT OF ME?
YEH THAT SOUNDS ABOUT RIGHT.
THAT'S THE BIGGEST LOAD OF CRAP I'VE EVER HEARD.

WHAT? YOU DON'T BELIEVE US?
WHY DON'T YOU BELIEVE US?
MERIAL, YOU'RE BLUE.
GREG'S GOT FREAKING GOAT HORNS UNDER HIS HAT!
JIM'S A DAMN 7 FOOT TALL UPRIGHT WALKING LION BIRD MAN WITH GREEN HAIR.
OF COURSE I DON'T BELIEVE A SINGLE FREAKING WORD OF THIS ENTIRE STUPID SITUATION!
HOW CAN YOU SAY THAT? LOOK AT YOURSELF!
WE'RE STILL THE SAME PEOPLE YOU KNOW FROM SCHOOL!

WHO I JUST FOUND OUT ARE A BUNCH OF FREAKY MONSTERS!
I'M SORRY, I CAN'T DO THIS
WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
AWAY
I'M GOING TO GO HOME, CLOSE MY EYES AND WAKE UP FROM THIS STUPID DREAM
YOU'RE ALL GOING TO BE NICE AND NORMAL AGAIN AND I'M GOING TO FORGET THIS EVER HAPPENED
PRETENDING THIS NEVER HAPPENED WON'T MAKE IT GO AWAY
I'VE TRIED THAT.
DON'T CARE.

MICHELLE WAIT DON'T GO!
PLEASE RECONSID-
DID YOU HEAR THAT?
HEAR WHAT?
SHHH!
-crack-
THAT.
-CRACK-
I HEAR IT, TOO
...
GRRRRRAAAAAAWWWWW

CRACK
CRUNCH
UGH. WHAT'S THAT SMELL?
IT SMELLS LIKE WET DOG
SNAP
SNAP
SNAP
CRUNCH!
AND ROTTING FISH
AND PEANUT BUTTER?
OKAY EVERYONE JOKE'S OVER, HAH HAH, BOY YOU-
RRRRAALLL
AHH!
GGGGGGGRRRRRRRRRR
SHH! STAY CALM AND LAY LOW!
TO HELL WITH THAT!
THUNK THUNK
SNAP!
I'M GETTING THE CRAP OUT OF HERE BEFO-
CRUNCH!
SCREEE
CHUNK!
HOLY GOD!

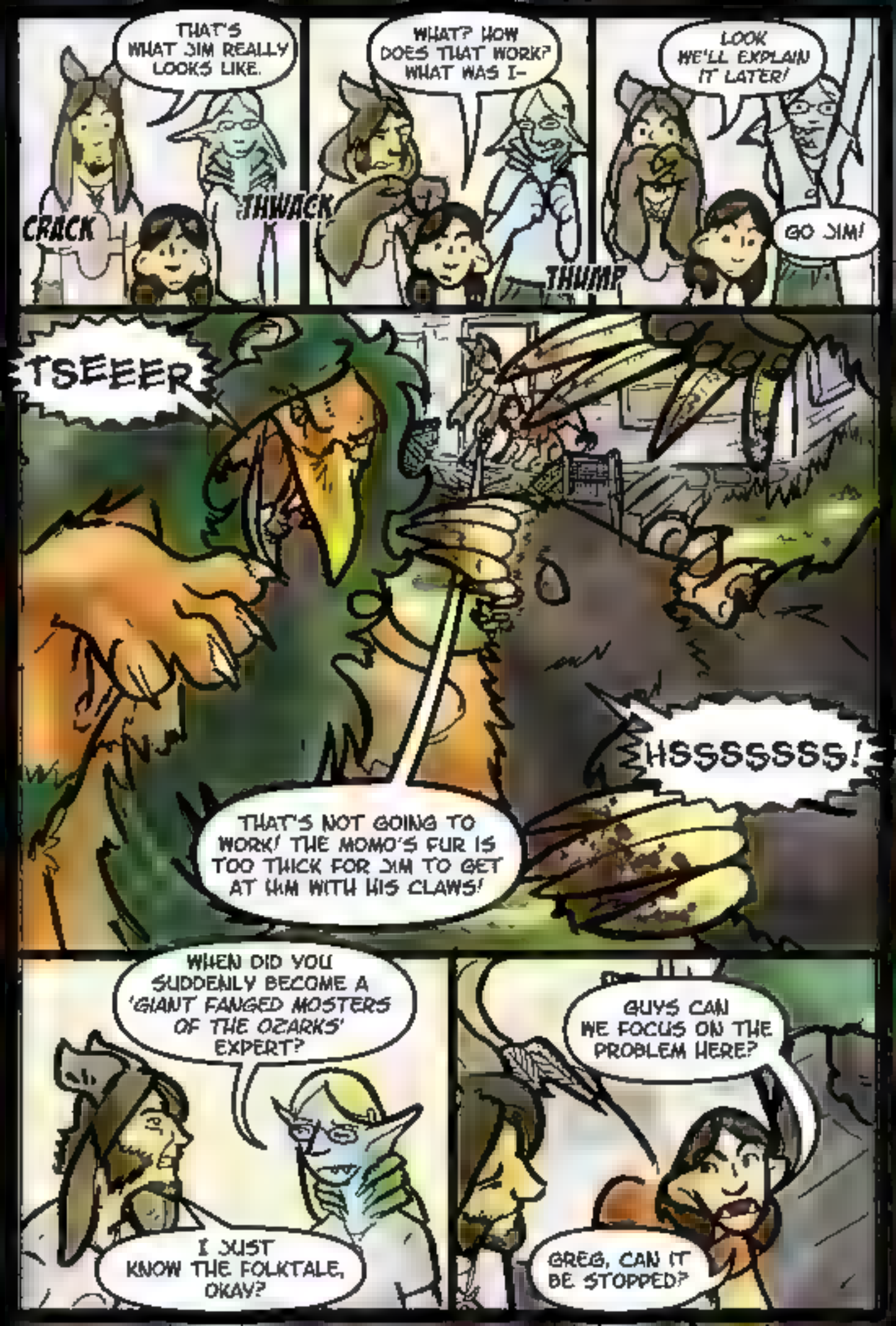
SPHIIIIIIIIINNNNXXXXXXX
TO BE CONTINUED!

skin deep

Orientations Part III

WHAT THE HELL!?
IT'S THE MOMO!
THE WHAT?
THE MISSOURI MONSTER!
IT'S LIKE A BIGFOOT, KINDA.
IT'S NOT SUPPOSED TO ATTACK PEOPLE, THOUGH!
WELL WE'RE NOT EXACTLY PEOPLE, ARE WE?

AND HOW THE HELL DO YOU KNOW ALL THAT?
SNIFF
MICHELLE, DO SOMETHING!
SNIFF
WHAT? ARE YOU HIGH!?
RRTP
RAAAAWWWRR
AHHH!
WHAM!
GET AWAY FROM HER!
WHA- JIM?
RRTP
CRACK!
IS THAT JIM!?
WHUMP!


THAT'S WHAT JIM REALLY LOOKS LIKE.
CRACK
THWACK
WHAT? HOW DOES THAT WORK? WHAT WAS I-
THUMP
LOOK WE'LL EXPLAIN IT LATER!
GO JIM!
TSEEER
HSSSSSSS!
THAT'S NOT GOING TO WORK! THE MOMO'S FUR IS TOO THICK FOR JIM TO GET AT HIM WITH HIS CLAWS!
WHEN DID YOU SUDDENLY BECOME A 'GIANT FANGED MOSTERS OF THE OZARKS' EXPERT?
I JUST KNOW THE FOLKTALE, OKAY?
GUYS CAN WE FOCUS ON THE PROBLEM HERE?
GREG, CAN IT BE STOPPED?

I DON'T KNOW!
ALL THE LEGENDS INVOLVE HIM GETTING SHOT OR SET ON FIRE, BUT HE ALWAYS SURVIVES!
SCREE!
WHAM!
RAAWWR
THUD!
CAN IT DROWN?
I DON'T KNOW!
MAYBE?
WHO KNOWS?
WHY?
I'VE GOT AN IDEA!
JIM!
TRY TO LURE IT TO THE RIVER!
OH FAB IDEA, MERIAL, LET ME GO ASK IT IF IT WANTS TO GO FOR A SWIM?
OH BUT BAD LUCK, I'M AFRAID, I LEFT MY SWIM TRUNKS IN-
SCREE!
BLEEDING SON OF A SODDING PIECE OF-
MMFF!

JUST TRY!
GREG, MICHELLE, HELP HIM!
GOD I DON'T KNOW HOW TO FIGHT A FREAKIN'-
HEY! OVER HERE! HEY!
ROCKS! YEAH HE'S REAL MAD NOW.
I DON'T SEE YOU HELPING!
AND STOP STARING AT MY HORNS
SORRY

PUFF
MMF!
JIM!
TSEER!!
CRUNCH!
WAARK!!
WUMP
UNNNGG...

MICHELLE, RUN!
SPPHHHINNNNNXXXX...
MICHELLE!
JIM.
MICHELLE!
WE HAVE TO RUN!
COME ON!
ACK! HOLD ON I'M NOT GOOD AT THIS!
FOLLOW ME!
HURRY!
SPHIINNXXX...

MICHELLE! HURRY! THE DOCK IS JUST UP HERE!
MERIAL! WE'RE HERE! WHERE ARE YOU?
HE'S GOING TO EAT ME HE'S GOING TO EAT ME THIS THING KILLED JIM AND AND I'M NOT GOING TO SEE MY 19TH BIRTHDAY AND I'M GOING TO DIE AS A BIG FREAKY LION THING!
CALM DOWN, CALM DOWN. JIM'S FINE AND NOBODY'S GETTING EATEN TODAY
MERIAL! ANY TIME NOW WOULD BE PEACHY!
RAAWWWRR-HUURK!
GREG! DO SOMETHING, PLEASE!
GOD THIS IS GOING TO HURT
WHUMP!

RRAAAWWR
RRAAAWWWRR
ANYTIME, NOW!
SERIOUSLY, I'M NOT DOING THIS BECAUSE I LIKE THE SMELL!
MICHELLE, PLEASE!
WHAT THE..
GRRRRRAAWR
RRT?
SPLOOSH!

RRRRWARGLE
GARGLE
RWAARGLGARGLE!!!
WHAT THE CRAP?
I WAS HOPING YOU WOULD TELL ME.
IT'S COMING FROM OVER...
MERIAL?

PANT
WHEEZE
GLARB
RACH-EL-GARGLE
RAWRRRRRRRRR
THUNK
THUNK
WHUMP

IS IT DEAD?
10 BUCKS IF YOU GO KICK IT
SHOVE HIM IN THE WATER!
PUSH
SHOVE
SPLOOSH
SPLISH
WELL THAT SHOULD DO IT
HE'S STARTING TO SINK, BUT THE CURRENT HAS HIM NOW
IF HE EVER WAKES UP, HE'LL BE FAR AWAY FROM US

HOW DID YOU DO THAT WATER THING?
OH I TOTALLY KNOW! I DIDN'T THINK I COULD PULL IT OFF BUT BAM! AWESOME, RIGHT?
COULD YOU HAND ME MY BOOTS?
WHAT? OH, YEAH.
MNN FN NN MMF?
YEAH I FOUND OUT ABOUT IT LIKE LAST YEAR AND I WAS ALL, WOAH! LOOK AT ME!
I DIDN'T KNOW MERMAIDS COULD DO THAT
THEY CAN'T, I'M A NIXIE THEY'RE DIFFERENT
GREGSTER CAN YOU LOOK FOR MY GLASSES PRETTY PLEASE?
UGH, FINE.
SO WHERE'S JIM?

JIM!
JIM, SPEAK TO ME! JIM ARE YOU ALRIGHT?
NNF WOT?
OH GOD, WHAT HAPPENED TO HIM?
MUM...PAULIE ATE ALL THE BISCUITS AGAIN.
THE MOMO ROUGHED HIM UP PRETTY BAD AND THREW HIM INTO THE TREES!
AND YOU JUST LEFT HIM HERE!?
IT WAS COMING AFTER US!
LORNE SAID LORNE DIDN'T WANT ME TO GO.

THESE GASHES DON'T LOOK SO HOT
HE'S LOST A LOT OF BLOOD
OY GETCHER HANDS OFF MY ARSE.
I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO!
NOT TILL.. SECOND DATE
JIM, CAN YOU GET HUMAN? WE CAN TAKE YOU TO A DOCTOR IF YOU CAN GET HUMAN.
..SAY A BIG DOG ATTACKED YOU OR SOMETHING.
HE HELPED SAVE ME EVEN AFTER I SAID ALL THOSE NASTY THINGS
I'M SO SORRY, JIM, I DIDN'T MEAN-
WHAT THE-
AHH!
FWASHH!

WHAT?
MICHELLE?
OUCH..
WHAT JUST HAPPENED?
JIM! OH THANK GOD YOU'RE OKAY!
ACK, RIGHT IN ME EAR.
OH NOW HOW THE HELL?
I'M GETTING TIRED OF THIS MYSTERIOUS HARRY POTTER BULLCRAP
FIRST I WAKE UP IN A BIG MYSTERY FOREST MILES FROM WHERE I PASSED OUT, THEN I KEEP DREAMING OF MY DEAD FATHER...
...NOW I'M BLASTING MAGIC HEALING RAYS OR WHATEVER FROM MY HANDS.
OH NO I'M SORRY, MY FREAKIN PAWS.

NEXT MONDAY.
HEY!
HEY
FEELING WEIRD YET?
THAT'S THE UNDERSTATEMENT OF THE YEAR.
YOU'RE LUCKY, YOU KNOW.
I WOULD HAVE KILLED TO HAVE MET OTHER PEOPLE LIKE ME WHEN I TURNED
LUCKY?
ARE YOU KIDDING ME?

LAST WEEK MY BIGGEST CONCERN WAS FINDING ALL OF MY CLASSES.
NOW I HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT SNEEZING AND ACCIDENTALLY GROWING A TAIL.
AND GETTING MY FACE EATEN BY SMELLY BIGFOOTS
...BIGFEET?
I DON'T KNOW, GREG, ALL I EVER WANTED WAS TO FIT IN AND BE NORMAL.
YOU'RE REALLY HUNG UP ON THAT WORD, AREN'T YOU?
'NORMAL.'
DO YOU KNOW HOW LUCKY YOU ARE?
MY GRANDFATHER DIED AFTER GIVING ME THIS UGLY PIECE OF CRAP WITHOUT EXPLAINING A DAMN THING.
I PANICKED. BROKE IT THE FIRST DAY.
DO YOU KNOW WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU BREAK A MEDALLION?

YOU CAN'T GET A NEW ONE, YOU KNOW THE ONE YOU HAVE IS THE ONE YOU'RE STUCK WITH
AFTER MINE CRACKED I BLACKED OUT AND WOKE UP IN THE WOODS A FEW DAYS LATER.
WHEN I GOT HOME I WAS DESPERATE TO MAKE IT ALL GO AWAY, BUT WHEN I PUT THE NECKLACE BACK ON .
I HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO PASS AS "NORMAL" SINCE I WAS FIFTEEN YEARS OLD
MERIAL AND I DIDN'T HAVE ANY SORT OF IDEA WHAT HAD HAPPENED TO US UNTIL YEARS AFTERWARD
WE'RE TRYING TO GIVE YOU WHAT WE DIDN'T HAVE-
- AND ALL YOU'RE DOING IS HAVING A PITY PARTY FOR YOURSELF
GREG, WAIT
SAVE IT

COME BACK!
I'M
I'M SORRY
LATER..
AND THEN IN 1812 THE AMERICAN FORCES DECLARED WAR ON BRITAIN AS ACTION AGAINST THE UNFAIR FRENCH TRADE BOYCOTTS MADISON WAS UNPREPARRED FOR WAR, AND ASSUMED THAT THE MILITIAS WOULD EASILY SIEZE CANADA. THIS DID NOT GO AS EASILY AS PLANNED
AND RESULTED IN THE CONSEQUENT BURNING OF THE WHITEHOUSE.
YAWN!!
A FACT NOT WIDLEY RECOGNIZED OR TAUGHT IN AMERICAN SCHOOLS.

HEY.
HEY
YOU WANNA PLAY? I NEED A LUIGI.
NNF.
HEEEYY BUDDY
YOU ALRIGHT?
NNNG.
YOU WANNA TALK?
HOW DO YOU DO IT, MERIAL?
HOW DO YOU ACT ALL BUBBLY AND CHEERY AFTER ALL THIS?

NOTHING SEEMS REAL ANYMORE.
JIM GOT REALLY HURT BY THAT THING THE OTHER DAY
YEAH, THAT'S TRUE. BUT HE'S FINE NOW, ISN'T HE?
BECAUSE OF YOU, MICHELLE. YOU SAVED HIS GIANT ORANGE ASS.
BUT I DON'T-
THERE'S NO USE WORRYING ABOUT SOMETHING THAT'S DONE AND OVER WITH, YOU KNOW?
BUT WHAT IF-
NO NO 'WHAT IFS' WHAT HAPPENS, HAPPENS. IF YOU START OBSESSING OVER WHAT COULD HAVE HAPPENED YOU'LL GO NUTS.
LISTEN, I KNOW YOU COULD HAVE NEVER PREPARED FOR SOMETHING LIKE THIS TO HAPPEN, BUT ALL YOU CAN DO IS ROLL WITH IT
WHEN I TURNED MY PARENTS KEPT ME LOCKED IN THE BATHROOM FOR FIVE WEEKS BECAUSE THEY DIDN'T KNOW HOW TO DEAL WITH ME.

WHAT DOES THAT HAVE TO DO WITH ME?
OH STOP WITH THE PITY PARTY ALREADY, DAMN.
I'M NOT GOING TO FEEL SORRY FOR YOU, MICHELLE
YEAH BUT WHEN YOU TURNED YOU DIDN'T TURN INTO SOMETHING THAT'S NOT SUPPOSED TO EXIST ANYMORE.
WHINE WHINE COMPLAIN MOAN.
DO YOU GUYS GET ATTACKED BY MONSTERS A LOT?
NO, ACTUALLY
I MEAN I'VE SEEN SOME CRAZY THINGS SINCE I FOUND OUT ABOUT ALL OF THIS BUT NOTHING LIKE THAT MOMO OR WHATEVER GREG CALLED IT
OH.
THAT WAS THE FIRST TIME I EVER FOUGHT ANYTHING.
STOP WORRYING. THERE'S NO USE FRETTING OVER SOMETHING YOU CAN'T CHANGE.
I DUNNO, MERIAL.
STAYING HUMAN AND PRETENDING THIS NEVER HAPPENED IS LOOKING PRETTY GOOD RIGHT NOW
YOU REALLY HAVEN'T SEEN THE FUN SIDE OF ALL THIS, MICHELLE.
JUST GIVE IT A CHANCE, PLEASE? IT REALLY IS GREAT ONCE YOU STOP TRYING SO HARD TO MAKE THINGS GO BACK TO "NORMAL."

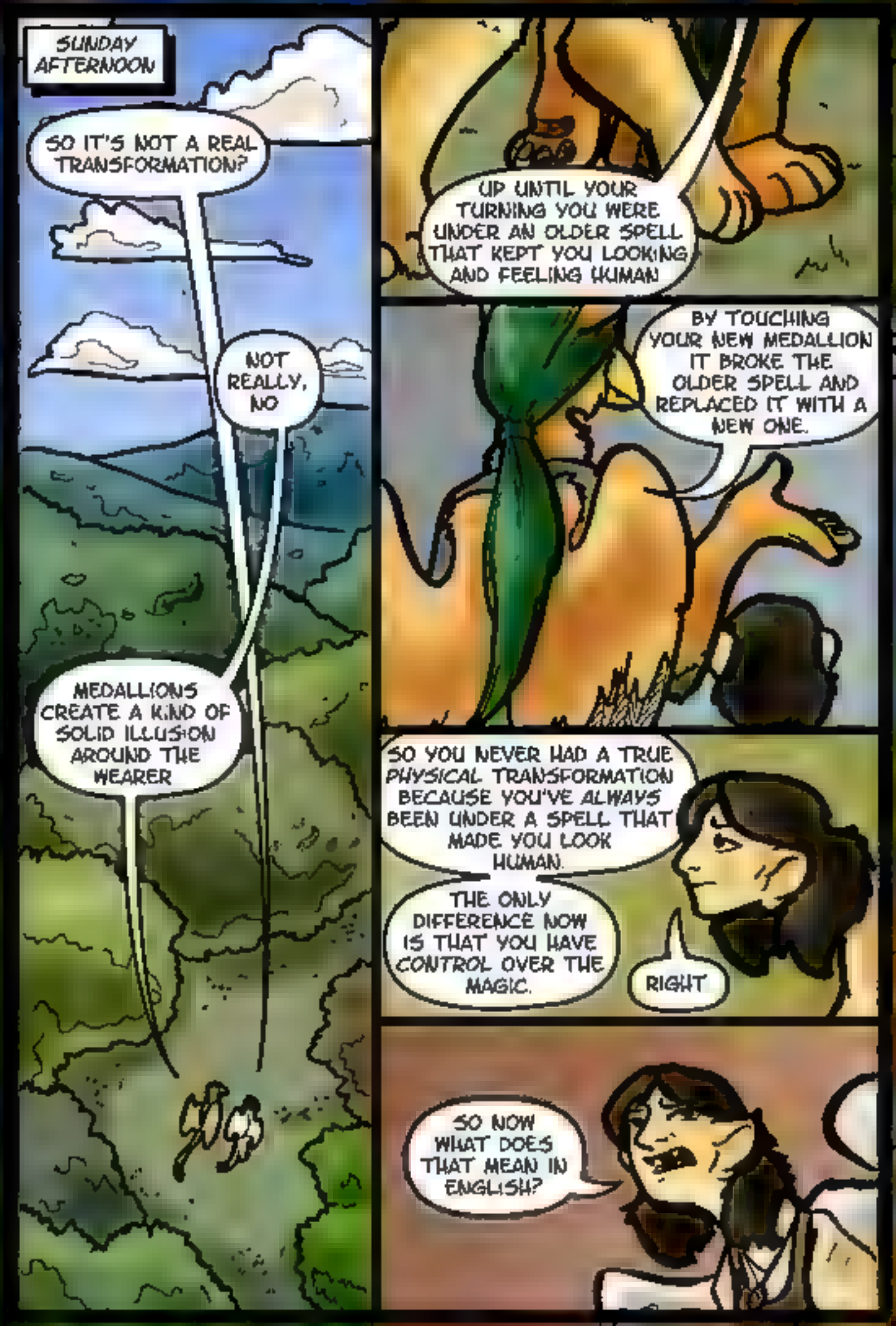
WAIT, WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
I'M GONNA SNEAK INTO THE POOL.
YOU THINK ABOUT THIS, OKAY?
THE MORE YOU ACCEPT THAT YOU'RE NOT HUMAN ANYMORE THE EASIER IT IS.
IT'S HARD, I KNOW, BUT JUST LET GO AND GIVE IT A TRY, YOU KNOW?
SEE YOU IN A FEW!
SLAM!
SIGH.

DUDE, CHECK IT OUT
THIS CHICK IS TOTALLY NOT WEARING PANTS.
TELL THE MISTRESS.
ABOUT WHAT? HOT HALF-NAKED LION CHICK?
WHY ARE WE EVEN UP HERE? WE HAVE MORE IMPORTANT THINGS TO DO THAN TO GAWK AT LADYPARTS
PERVERT
OPEN YOUR EYES AND LOOK, YOU MORON SHE'LL WANT TO KNOW ABOUT THIS
YEAH YEAH, FINE
AND TELL DAMIEN TO GET THAT FREAKIN' MONSTER OUT OF THE RIVER.
WHATEVER.
AND KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR GABE, FOR CHRISSAKES. WE DO NOT NEED THAT THING SCREWING WITH OUR ORDERS
I WILL I WILL, JEEZE.
SIGH.
TO BE CONTINUED!

Next Issue: Holy crap guys did you see that freakin' dragon? What the heck, right? I mean those aren't supposed to just pop out of forests like that.

Mysteries solved! Characters revealed! More dragon action!

The exciting conclusion to the Orientations Arc comes at'cha February 18th!


SUNDAY AFTERNOON
SO IT'S NOT A REAL TRANSFORMATION?
NOT REALLY, NO
MEDALLIONS CREATE A KIND OF SOLID ILLUSION AROUND THE WEARER
UP UNTIL YOUR TURNING YOU WERE UNDER AN OLDER SPELL THAT KEPT YOU LOOKING AND FEELING HUMAN
BY TOUCHING YOUR NEW MEDALLION IT BROKE THE OLDER SPELL AND REPLACED IT WITH A NEW ONE.
SO YOU NEVER HAD A TRUE PHYSICAL TRANSFORMATION BECAUSE YOU'VE ALWAYS BEEN UNDER A SPELL THAT MADE YOU LOOK HUMAN.
THE ONLY DIFFERENCE NOW IS THAT YOU HAVE CONTROL OVER THE MAGIC.
RIGHT
SO NOW WHAT DOES THAT MEAN IN ENGLISH?

IT MEANS THAT YOUR HUMAN DISGUISE IS JUST A DISGUISE, NOT A TRUE FORM.
WHEN I GO FROM HUMAN TO MIDFORM I DON'T PHYSICALLY GROW WINGS, THEY JUST APPEAR
AND I CAN'T USE OR FEEL THEM BECAUSE THE MAGIC OF THE MEDALLION WON'T ALLOW IT
I THINK I'M GOING TO HAVE TO FIGURE THIS OUT BY WATCHING BECAUSE I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT ANY OF THAT MEANS.
WHAT'S A MIDFORM?
THAT'S THE FORM I'VE TAKEN NOW
MEDALLIONS LET YOU TAKE ANY SHAPE BETWEEN YOUR NATURAL BODY AND HUMAN
MORE ANIMAL-LIKE RACES, LIKE GRYPHONS FOR EXAMPLE, HAVE ADOPTED A FORM THAT'S INBETWEEN THE TWO SHAPES
IT COMBINES THE BEST ATTRIBUTES OF BOTH!

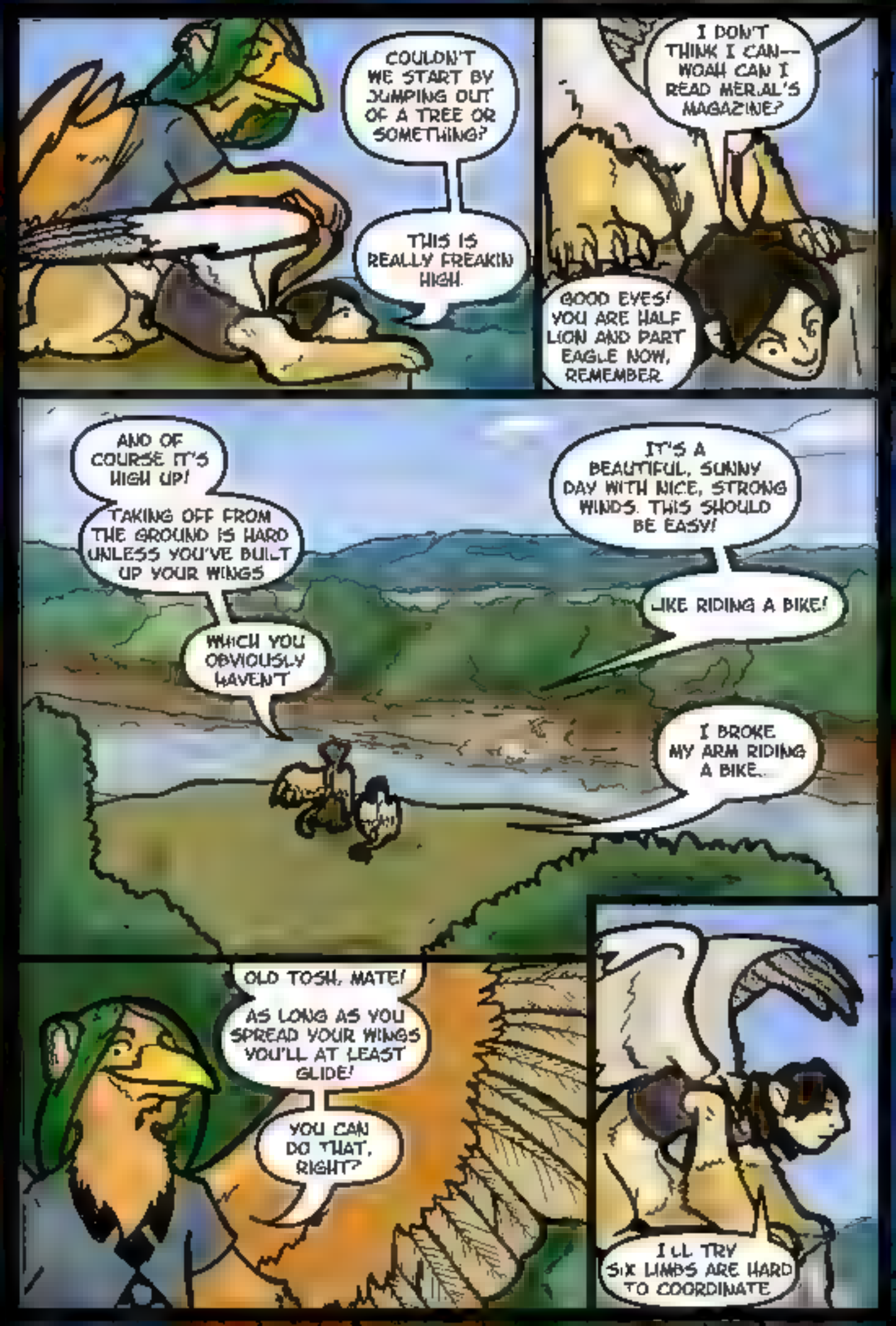
GOD THIS IS REALLY CONFUSING.
DON'T WORRY, YOU'LL PICK A LOT OF IT UP AS YOU GO
WATCH, RIGHT?
I WAS BORN LIKE THIS, YEH?
WELL NOT THIS BIG OBVIOUSLY BUT YOU GET THE IDEA
THIS IS HOW I REALLY LOOK, WITH NO HELP FROM MAGIC.
AND THIS IS HOW YOU MET ME, RIGHT? THIS FORM IS PURE ILLUSION, NOTHING HERE IS REAL
WELL MAYBE THE HAIR
NO MATTER WHAT, I'M STILL A GRYPHON, SEE?
AND THIS IS ME MIDFORM, IT'S KIND OF A HALFWAY POINT DO YOU UNDERSTAND?

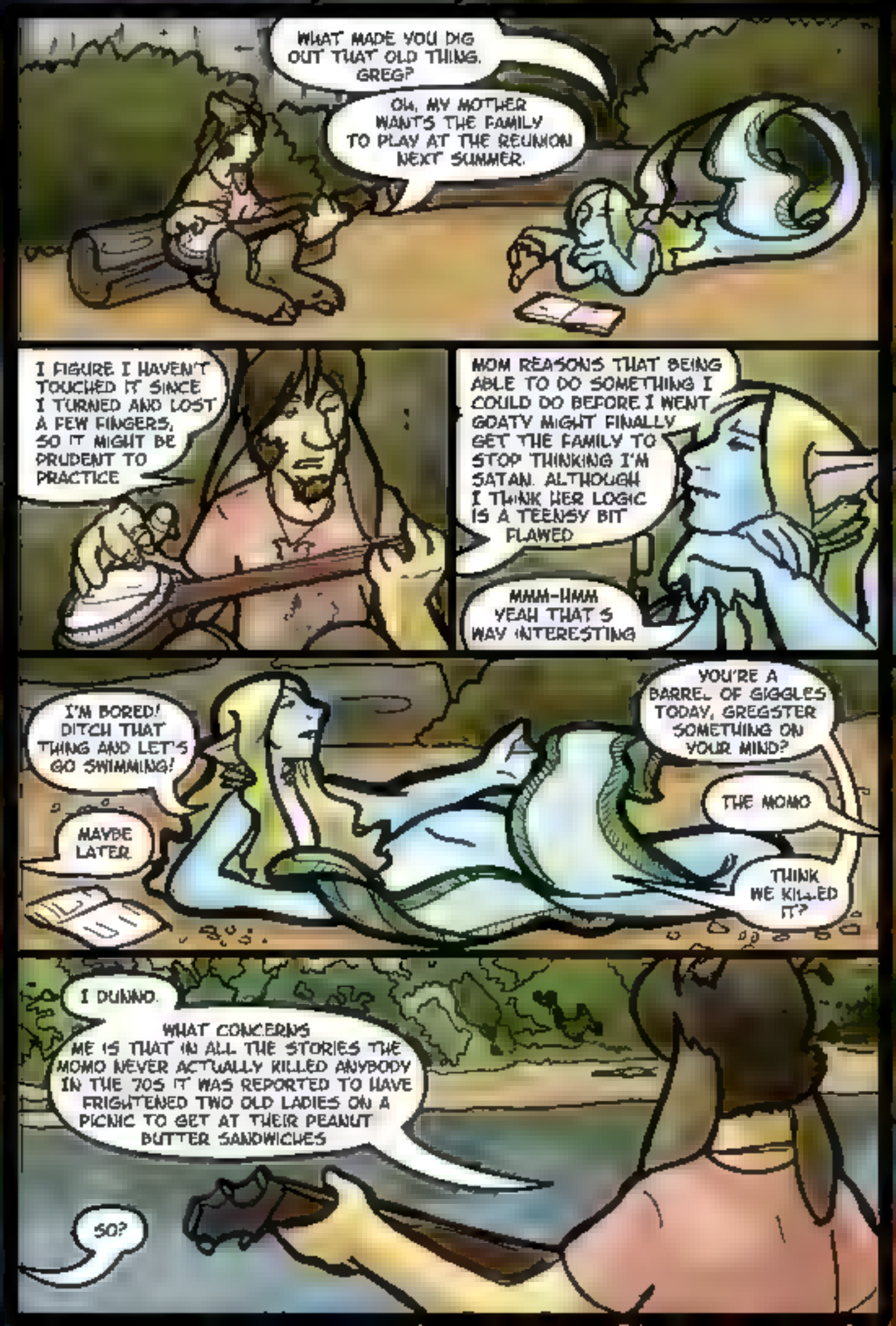
SO I COULD TAKE A FORM WHERE I COULD WALK ON TWO LEGS?
YES, BUT IT WILL TAKE TIME.
YOU SHOULD GET USED TO YOUR NATURAL BODY BEFORE TRYING ANYTHING NEW
BUT IF THE FORM IS JUST AN ILLUSION, WHY DO I FEEL LIKE I'M ON TWO LEGS WHEN I'M HUMAN?
SHOULDN'T I FEEL LIKE I'M ON ALL FOURS ALL THE TIME?
AND HOW DO YOUR CLOTHES SHOW UP WHEN YOU TRANSFORM FROM FULLFORM TO MIDFORM?
ARE THE CLOTHES EVEN REAL? I HAD TO CUT UP MY SHIRT FOR MY WINGS
IF EVERYTHING IS JUST AN ILLUSION HOW CAN YOU FIT INTO ROOMS AND CARS? YOU'RE LIKE, WHAT, FOURTEEN FEET LONG!
OY LOOK, IT'S ALL SUPER ADVANCED MAGIC AND I CAN'T EXPLAIN IT BECAUSE I REALLY HAVE NO IDEA HOW IT WORKS.
WHEN I USE THE MEDALLION I CAN FIT INTO PLACES I NORMALLY COULDN'T BECAUSE THE MAGIC. GOD I DON'T KNOW, IT JUST LETS ME DO IT
THE CLOTHES ARE REAL, BUT THEY'RE KIND OF "STORED" OR SOMETHING WHEN YOU'RE IN A FORM THAT DOESN'T NEED THEM.
LIKE HOW YOU DON'T NEED PANTS WHEN YOU'RE A SPHINX, BUT THEY SHOW UP WHEN YOU TURN INTO A HUMAN

LOOK IT MAKES MORE SENSE WHEN YOU GET MORE OF A FEEL FOR IT
MY PERSONAL MOTTO IS "TADAAA. MAGIC!"
YEAH I'M NOT SO SURE ABOUT THIS "NO PANTS" THING.
GETTING DRAFTS WHERE DRAFTS SHOULD NOT BE GOTTEN
OH YOU'LL GET USED TO THAT.
I USED TO HATE WEARING CLOTHES WHEN I FIRST GOT ME MEDALLION AND IT TOOK ME MUM WEEKS TO GET ME TO STAY IN THEM.
YOU SHOULD SEE CENTAURS. THEY PUT ON SHIRTS BUT JUST LET THEIR HORSE BITS FLAP IN THE WIND. IT'S HARD NOT TO LAUGH
BUT YOU SHOULDN'T LAUGH.
BECAUSE THEY'LL KICK YOU.
THEY'LL KICK YOU HARD.

FINALLY!
I THOUGHT WE'D NEVER CLIMB TO THE TOP OF THIS BLOODY CLIFF!
WHERE ARE WE?
AT THE SITE OF YOUR FIRST FLYING LESSON!
I'M SORRY, WHAT? FLYING?
WELL SURE! WHAT'CHA THINK THOSE THINGS ON YOUR BACK ARE FOR? HEAVY AWKARD DECORATIONS?
WELL I HADN'T REALLY THOUGHT ABOUT IT...
JIM THIS IS HIGH.
LOOK THERE'S GREG AND MERIAL ON THE BANK DOWN THERE!
NO REALLY THIS IS A BIG FREAKIN' CLIFF

HEY DID YOU KNOW KEITH MOON CAME UP WITH LED ZEPPELIN'S NAME?
UUH, YEAH?
YEAH
OY! MERIAL! GREG!
UP HERE, MATES! HEY! LOOK!
LOOKS LIKE JIM MADE IT UP THE CLIFF
TOOK THEM LONG ENOUGH.
I DON'T THINK THEY HEARD YOU.
HAVE YOU SEEN GREG'S EARS? OF COURSE HE HEARD US.


COULDN'T WE START BY JUMPING OUT OF A TREE OR SOMETHING?
THIS IS REALLY FREAKIN HIGH.
I DON'T THINK I CAN-- WOAH CAN I READ MERJAL'S MAGAZINE?
GOOD EYES! YOU ARE HALF LION AND PART EAGLE NOW, REMEMBER.
AND OF COURSE IT'S HIGH UP!
TAKING OFF FROM THE GROUND IS HARD UNLESS YOU'VE BUILT UP YOUR WINGS
WHICH YOU OBVIOUSLY HAVEN'T
IT'S A BEAUTIFUL, SUNNY DAY WITH NICE, STRONG WINDS. THIS SHOULD BE EASY!
LIKE RIDING A BIKE!
I BROKE MY ARM RIDING A BIKE...
OLD TOSH, MATE!
AS LONG AS YOU SPREAD YOUR WINGS YOU'LL AT LEAST GLIDE!
YOU CAN DO THAT, RIGHT?
I'LL TRY SIX LIMBS ARE HARD TO COORDINATE


WHAT MADE YOU DIG OUT THAT OLD THING, GREG?
OH, MY MOTHER WANTS THE FAMILY TO PLAY AT THE REUNION NEXT SUMMER.
I FIGURE I HAVEN'T TOUCHED IT SINCE I TURNED AND LOST A FEW FINGERS, SO IT MIGHT BE PRUDENT TO PRACTICE
MOM REASONS THAT BEING ABLE TO DO SOMETHING I COULD DO BEFORE I WENT GOATY MIGHT FINALLY GET THE FAMILY TO STOP THINKING I'M SATAN. ALTHOUGH I THINK HER LOGIC IS A TEENSY BIT FLAWED
MMM-HMM YEAH THAT'S WAY INTERESTING
I'M BORED! DITCH THAT THING AND LET'S GO SWIMMING!
MAYBE LATER
YOU'RE A BARREL OF GIGGLES TODAY, GREGSTER SOMETHING ON YOUR MIND?
THE MOMO
THINK WE KILLED IT?
I DUNNO.
WHAT CONCERNS ME IS THAT IN ALL THE STORIES THE MOMO NEVER ACTUALLY KILLED ANYBODY IN THE 70S IT WAS REPORTED TO HAVE FRIGHTENED TWO OLD LADIES ON A PICNIC TO GET AT THEIR PEANUT BUTTER SANDWICHES
SO?

SO WHAT I'M SAYING IS THAT HE'S NOT KNOWN TO ATTACK PEOPLE OUT OF THE BLUE LIKE IT DID WITH US
WHAT WE DID THE OTHER DAY DOESN'T GO ALONG AT ALL WITH ANY OF THE LEGENDS, AND IF IT WEREN'T FOR MICHELLE'S SURPRISE MAGIC HEAL-Y POWERS, WHO KNOWS WHAT HE COULD HAVE DONE TO JIM?
THERE'S SOMETHING NOT RIGHT WITH IT
JUST BECAUSE THERE AREN'T STORIES OF IT KILLING PEOPLE DOESN'T MEAN IT HASN'T
I MEAN IT WAS COVERED IN BLOOD WHEN IT FOUND US.
IN FOLKTALES, EVEN HARMLESS CREATURES GET LABLED AS MAN-EATERS TO TELL A BETTER STORY
I'M ALMOST CERTAIN THE MOMO WOULDN'T TYPICALLY ATTACK PEOPLE
SO, WHAT? YOU'RE SUGGESTING THAT SOMETHING MADE IT ATTACK US?
MAYBE.
LIKE WHAT? WHO WOULD WANT TO HURT US?
I DON'T KNOW IT JUST FEELS WRONG IS ALL.
I'M GOING TO DIE!!!
WELL WITH THAT ATTITUDE YOU WON'T ACCOMPLISH ANYTHING!

I'VE DECIDED TO SPEND THE REST OF MY LIFE ON THE GROUND.
THANK YOU VERY MUCH, BUT I'M JUST NOT COMFORTABLE WITH HURLING MYSELF OFF A BIG SCARY CLIFF.
COME ON, MICHELLE, IT'S REALLY VERY EASY
IF MY CRIPPLED WINGLESS FATHER COULD TEACH A HYPERACTIVE ELEVEN YEAR OLD LIKE ME TO FLY YOU CAN DO IT, EASY!
WOW THAT IS AN AMAZING STORY CAN WE GO BACK NOW?
BLIMEY, WHAT'S THAT COMING OUT OF THE FOREST?
OH MY GOD, IS IT THE MOMO AGAIN!?
GAH!

JUST OPEN YOUR BLEEDIN' WINGS!!
I'M TRYING I'M TRYING!
C'MON C'MON OPEN OPEN OPEN! MOVE YOU STUPID FREAKIN'-
OH! OH I GOT IT!
WOOSH
OH HOLY CRAP! I'M DOING IT!
JIM JIM JIM! JIM LOOK! HOLY CRAP! I'M FLYING!
ACTUALLY, YOU'RE JUST GLIDING.
TRY FLAPPING, THEN YOU'LL FLY

CAN YOU PLAY THAT SONG FROM DELIVERANCE?
I'D RATHER NOT
PLOOSH!
OMIGAWD OH WOW! THAT WAS, HOLY CRAP WOW!
OH MAN I JUST JUMPED OFF A CLIFF AND I'M NOT DEAD!
GOOD GOD THAT WAS AWESOME!
AND HOW DARE YOU CHUCK ME OFF A GIANT CLIFF!
I COULD'VE DROPPED LIKE A FREAKIN' ROCK!
WELL IT'S HOW I LEARNED AND I TURNED OUT FINE, DIDN'T I? IT'S NOT LIKE YOU GAVE ME MUCH OF A CHOICE
NOW LET'S TRY AGAIN, SHALL WE?
AGAIN?

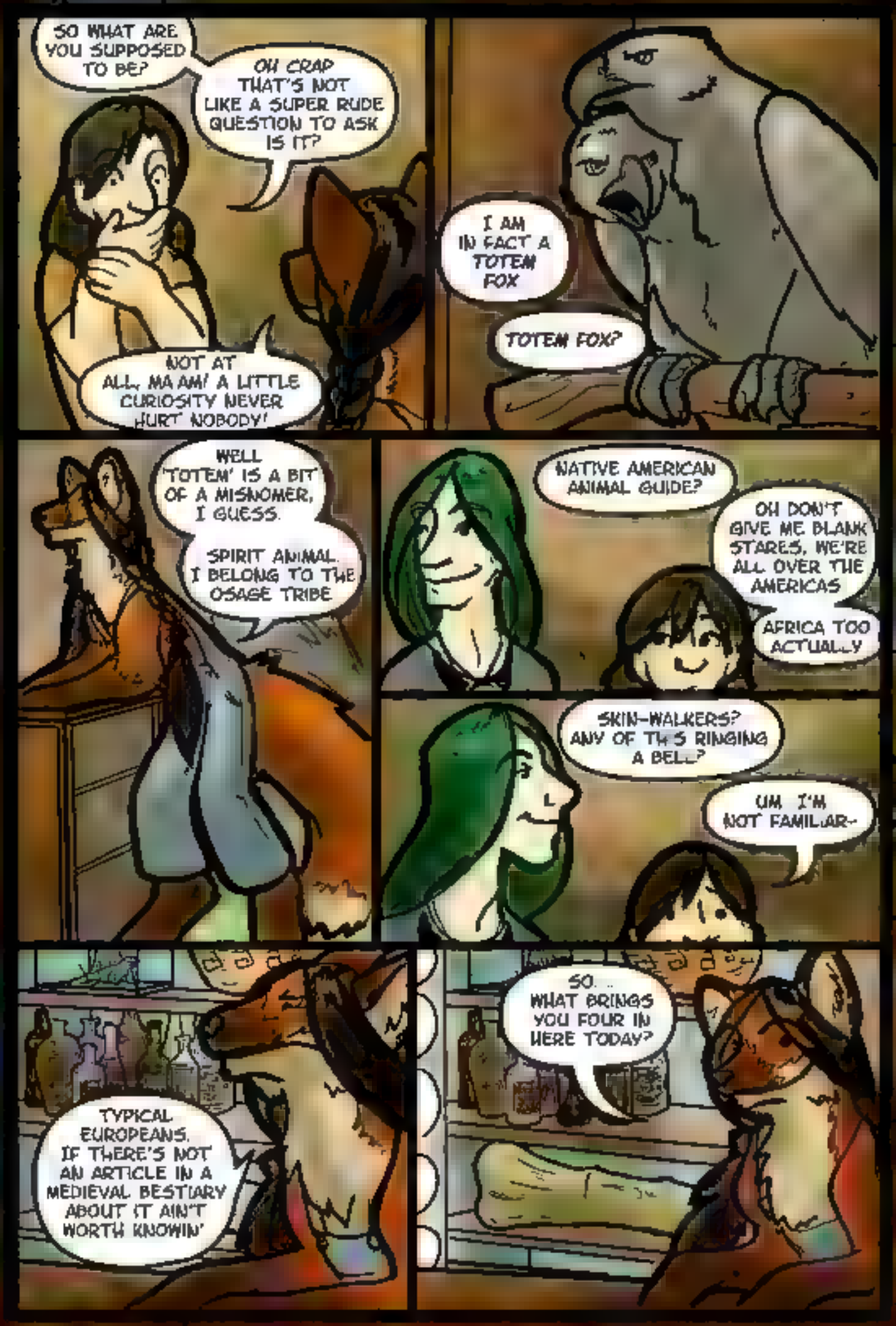
I JUST FEEL THAT WE SHOULDN'T BRUSH OFF THE INCIDENT LIKE IT WAS A FLUKE.
I'M TELLING YOU THE MOMO DOESN'T JUST ATTACK WITHOUT WARNING OR REASON
MONDAY MORNING
YOU GOT A BIT OF EAR STICKING OUT THERE, SON.
IS HE STILL GOING ON ABOUT THIS MOMO BUSINESS?
WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN? HE HASN'T SHUT UP ABOUT IT
GREG HAS A POINT, THOUGH.
IT'D BE NICE IF THERE WAS SOMEONE WE COULD GO TO FOR SOME ADVICE ON THE TOPIC, YOU KNOW?

WHAT ABOUT EUSTACE AT THE AVALON? HE'S LIVED AROUND HERE FOR A LONG TIME. WE MIGHT KNOW A FEW THINGS
THE AVALON! SODDING HELL. I CAN'T BELIEVE WE DIDN'T THINK OF THAT SOONER!
WE CAN ASK EUSTACE FOR HELP AND SHOW MICHELLE THE AVALON TOO!
MINUTES LATER
AVALON?
COR, FINISH YOUR CRAPPY FOOD. WE'RE GOING IMMEDIATELY
NAMED AFTER THE MAGICAL HIDDEN ISLAND KING ARTHUR WAS LAID TO REST ON.
LIKE LITTLE MYTHICAL SAFE HOUSES. THEY ARE. WHERE WE CAN TALK TO OTHERS IN THE KNOW, RIGHT?
AND HERE WE ARE!
THERE'S SOMETHING REALLY ANTICLIMACTIC ABOUT ALL THIS

AFTER ALL YOUR TALKING I WAS EXPECTING SOME KIND OF MAGIC SHOP FROM GARGOYLES OR SOMETHING.
OH I USED TO LOVE GARGOYLES.
....
AN ABANDONED THEATER IN A RUN-DOWN STRIP MALL IS NOT TERRIBLY IMPRESSIVE, IS ALL I'M SAYING.
KEEP OUT
MOST 'ABANDONED' BUILDINGS AREN'T REALLY ABANDONED.
WE USE THEM FOR SHOPS AND MEETING PLACES AND THE LIKE.
WE KEEP 'EM RUN DOWN SO THEY DON'T ATTRACT ATTENTION.
WOW, IT LOOKS SO MUCH BETTER ON THE INSIDE.
IT'S UPSTAIRS, YOU SMARTASS
WOULDN'T WANT SOME PUNK OFF THE STREET TO PEEK IN AND SEE A BUNCH OF MAGIC CRAP, WOULD YOU?

HERE WE ARE!
WOW.
IS THIS A LITTLE MORE WHAT YOU WERE THINKING?
I CAN'T THINK OF ANYTHING SARCASTIC TO SAY
OH GOOD!
Do Not Feed
TOP O' THE MORNIN' TO YOU, EUSTACE!
WHAT, ARE YOU IRISH NOW, BOY?
THE WHOLE "CONFUSE THE BUMPKIN WITH DIFFERENT ACCENTS" GAME GOT OLD BY THE THIRD WEEK.
"OH NO, I'M SCOTTISH. WHY, DON'T YOU KNOW WHAT DUTCH SOUNDS LIKE?" BLAH BLAH BLAH
DID YOU STOP BY TO HARASS ME OR ARE YOU GOING TO BUY SOMETHING THIS TIME?
OH, PARDON ME, MISSUS I DIDN'T SEE YOU THERE
HI.
CRIMINY JIMMY, DID YOU FIND ANOTHER ONE?

OH RIGHT, THIS IS MICHELLE. SHE'S A -
NO, NO, I LIKE TO GUESS
LET'S SEE. MEDITERRANEAN. FELINE. SOME AVIAN.
'NOTHER GRYPHON?
ER, UM NO. I'M -
- WINGED LION! RIGHT, 'SHELL?
YEAH?
YEAH SHE JUST TURNED A COUPLE WEEKS AGO
BOY HOWDY, SHE'S BRAND NEW, HUH?
WELL MISS, MY NAME IS EUSTACE SWIFTRUNNER, AND AS YOU'VE PROBABLY GATHERED, THIS IS MY HUMBLE SHOP
I HOPE YOU'RE MANAGING WELL. FROM WHAT I HEAR TURNING IS A RIGHT BASTARD, WHAT WITH HAVING TO DEAL WITH ALL THE NEW INSTINCTS AND SENSES AND WHATNOT
WELL ASIDE FROM LIKING MY STEAKS RARE I GUESS I'M DOING ALL RIGHT?
SHE HASN'T EATEN ANY LIVE SQUIRRELS OR CLAWED UP THE FURNITURE YET AT LEAST
THAT'S A JOKE, RIGHT?


SO WHAT ARE YOU SUPPOSED TO BE?
OH CRAP THAT'S NOT LIKE A SUPER RUDE QUESTION TO ASK IS IT?
NOT AT ALL, MA'AM! A LITTLE CURIOSITY NEVER HURT NOBODY!
I AM IN FACT A TOTEM FOX
TOTEM FOX?
WELL 'TOTEM' IS A BIT OF A MISNOMER, I GUESS.
SPIRIT ANIMAL. I BELONG TO THE OSAGE TRIBE
NATIVE AMERICAN ANIMAL GUIDE?
OH DON'T GIVE ME BLANK STARES, WE'RE ALL OVER THE AMERICAS
AFRICA TOO ACTUALLY
SKIN-WALKERS? ANY OF THIS RINGING A BELL?
UM I'M NOT FAMILIAR-
TYPICAL EUROPEANS. IF THERE'S NOT AN ARTICLE IN A MEDIEVAL BESTIARY ABOUT IT AIN'T WORTH KNOWIN'
SO... WHAT BRINGS YOU FOUR IN HERE TODAY?

WELL EUSTACE, WE WERE WONDERING IF YOU KNEW ANYTHING ABOUT THE MISSOURI MONSTER
THE MOMO!?
I'VE JUST HEARD RUMORS LIKE EVERYONE ELSE A BIG BRUTE, HE IS, BUT HARMLESS REALLY
WELL, UNLESS YER A DOG.
MOMO LIKES DOGS
TOLD YOU
WELL HE WASN'T THAT HARMLESS THE OTHER DAY
YOU SAW 'IM!? BOY HOWDY, WHAT WAS THAT LIKE?
PAINFUL. HE ATTACKED US OUTRIGHT WITH NO WARNING WHATSOEVER.
ANY IDEA WHY?
NOT A CLUE WE WERE HOPING YOU MIGHT KNOW
HMM. WHY I SURE DON'T KNOW, SPORT
ALL THE STORIES I'VE HEARD HAVE PAINTED HIM AS A RIGHT FRIENDLY BEAST, AS FAR AS BIG MONSTERS ARE CONCERNED.
IF ALL THE TALES ARE TRUE AND HE ATTACKED YOU SOMETHIN'S WONKED FOR SURE.
TOLD YOU
PUT A SOCK IN IT, GREG
POSSESSION IS A POSSIBILITY.
MARSHALL!

EVIL SPIRITS CAN MAKE MOST ANYTHING ACT FUNNY. MAKE YER OWN GRANDMOTHER PUNCH YOU IN THE FACE IF THEY SO PLEASE.
MARSHALL, HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN EAVESDROPPING?
A CROW?
RAVEN.
CROWS ARE FILTHY ANIMALS
OH. SORRY
OH WHERE ARE MY MANNERS? THIS IS A GOOD FRIEND OF MINE, MARSHALL CORTIS.
MARSHALL, YOU'RE QUITE THE PANAMERICAN TRAVELER, MAYBE YOU CAN HELP MY CUSTOMERS HERE.
YOU LOOK LIKE A CROW FROM DUMBO THAT FELL INTO A PRODUCTION OF HAIR
JIM! THAT'S RUDE, RIGHT?
YES
JIM!
WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY EVIL SPIRITS? LIKE DEMONS? ARE DEMONS REAL? WHAT WOULD THEY WANT WITH US?

WELL I SEEN 'EM DIVE RIGHT INSIDE OF FOLKS AND TAKE CONTROL OF THEIR BODIES.
SAW IT HAPPEN ONCE IN OREGON. SOME DEMON JUMPED RIGHT INSIDE THIS KID MADE HIM DO LOTS OF CREEPY THINGS - EATIN' CATS AND STUFF
HMMM. THAT DOESN'T SOUND QUITE RIGHT WHEN THE MOMO ATTACKED US HE SEEMED MORE LIKE A ZOMBIE, SHUFFLIN' ABOUT AND MUMBLING
S'THAT RIGHT?
WELL, THE MOMO'S NOT SUPPOSED TO BE TOO BRIGHT DEMON'S MIGHT COULDA CONTROLLED IT REMOTELY SEEN IT HAPPEN IN UTAH.
THAT'A WAY THEY KEEP A LOWER PROFILE, YOU [redacted]
[redacted] WHAT WOULD DEMONS WANT WITH US?
HAVEN'T THE FOGGIEST MAYBE THEY'RE JUST PLAYIN' TRICKS.
WELL WE'RE TRICKSTERS TOO, MARSH, BUT WE DON'T NORMALLY TRY TO KILL FOLKS.

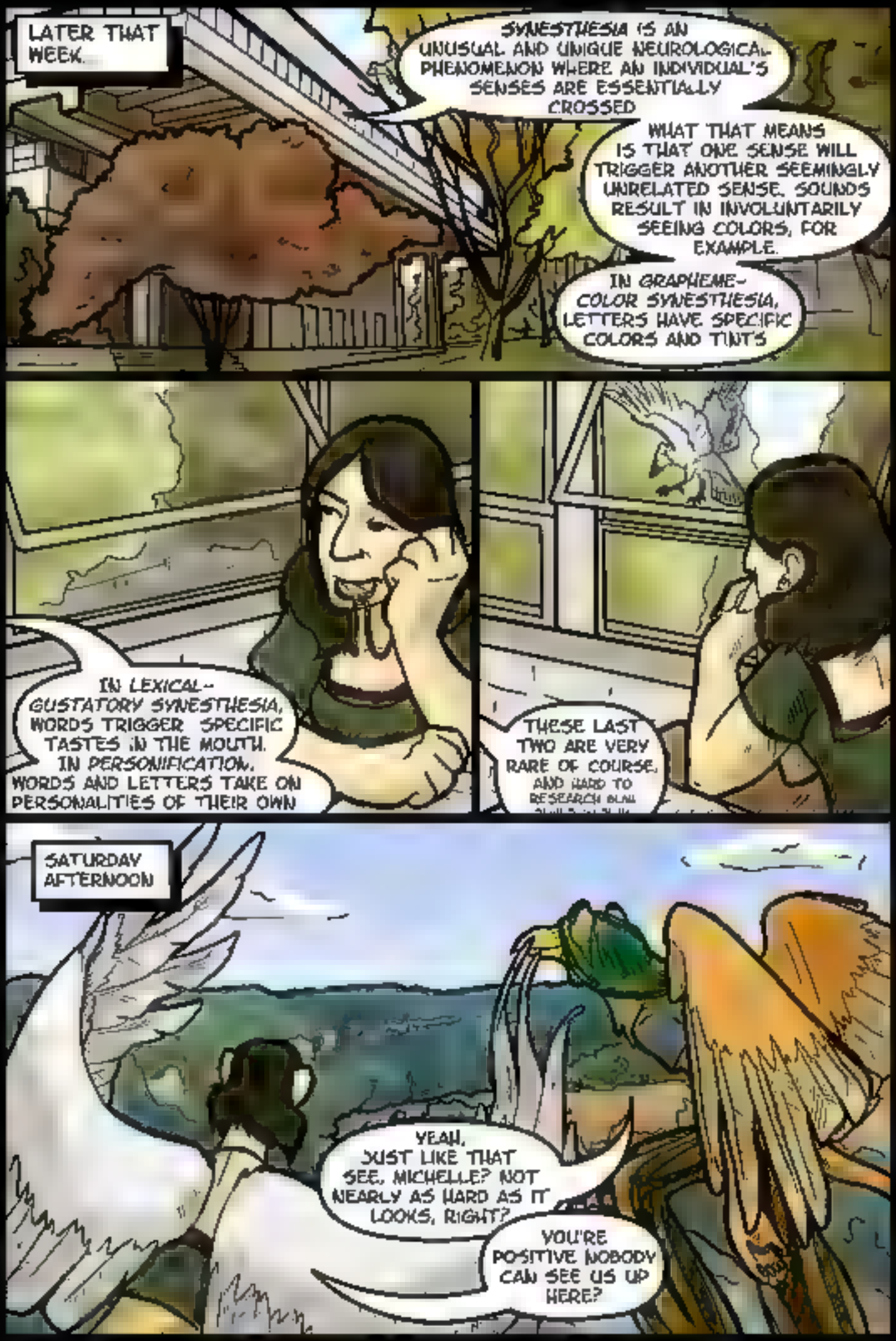
ANYTHIN' UNUSUAL HAPPEN THAT DAY?
NOT THAT I CAN THINK OF, NO.
SAYS YOU!
IT WAS BY FAR THE WEIRDEST DAY OF MY LIFE.
YOU DON'T SAY?
OH, SHE TURNED THAT DAY BUT WHY WOULD THAT ATTRACT A DEMON?
IF SHE HAD A LOT OF MAGIC IN HER, MAYBE. TURNIN' LIKE THAT USUALLY LET OFF A LARGE AMOUNT OF PENT-UP ENERGY
THINGS LIKE THAT ARE BOUND TO ALERT SOMETHIN'
BUT THAT SHOULDN'T BE THE CASE HERE, SEEIN' AS YOU SAY SHE'S JUST A WINGED LION AND ALL.
THEY'RE NOT KNOWN TO HAVE ANY SUPERNATURAL POWERS.
UNLESS YER LYIN' TO US FOR SOME REASON.

HAHA, YEAH, YOU SURE YOU AIN'T HIDIN' A GREAT DAMN SPHINX OR SOMETHIN'?
OH WHAT A HOOT THAT WOULD BE.
THAT'D SURE BOOST THE POPULARITY OF THIS PLACE, WOULDN'T IT?
MAKE A LITTLE CASH? BUY A THEATRE IN BRANSON...
"LAST SPHINX, PERFORMING LIVE AT THE ANDY WILLIAMS THEATRE!"
"[redacted] SPECIAL GUESTS, "THE OSMONDS!"
OH SCREW THE OSMONDS, EUST I WOULD SETTLE FOR NO LESS THAN YAKOV SMIRNOFF HIMSELF THIS IS THE LAST SPHINX WE'RE TALKING ABOUT. DON'T SELL YOURSELF SHORT
HAHAHA YEAH THAT'S SUPER FUNNY, GUYS.
WHAT'S GOING ON OVER THERE?
THEY SAW THE MOMO!
SERIOUSLY?
YEAH, HEH HEH HEH...
YEAH, AND SOMETHING ABOUT DEMONS OR SOMETHING
ANY OTHER THOUGHTS ABOUT WHY A DEMON WOULD BE INTERESTED IN US?
UNLESS THEY'RE A TYPE OF DEMON THAT SPECIALIZES IN TERRORIZING CURSED GRYPHONS AND SHY SATYRS, I DON'T SEE A PARTICULAR REASON, NO

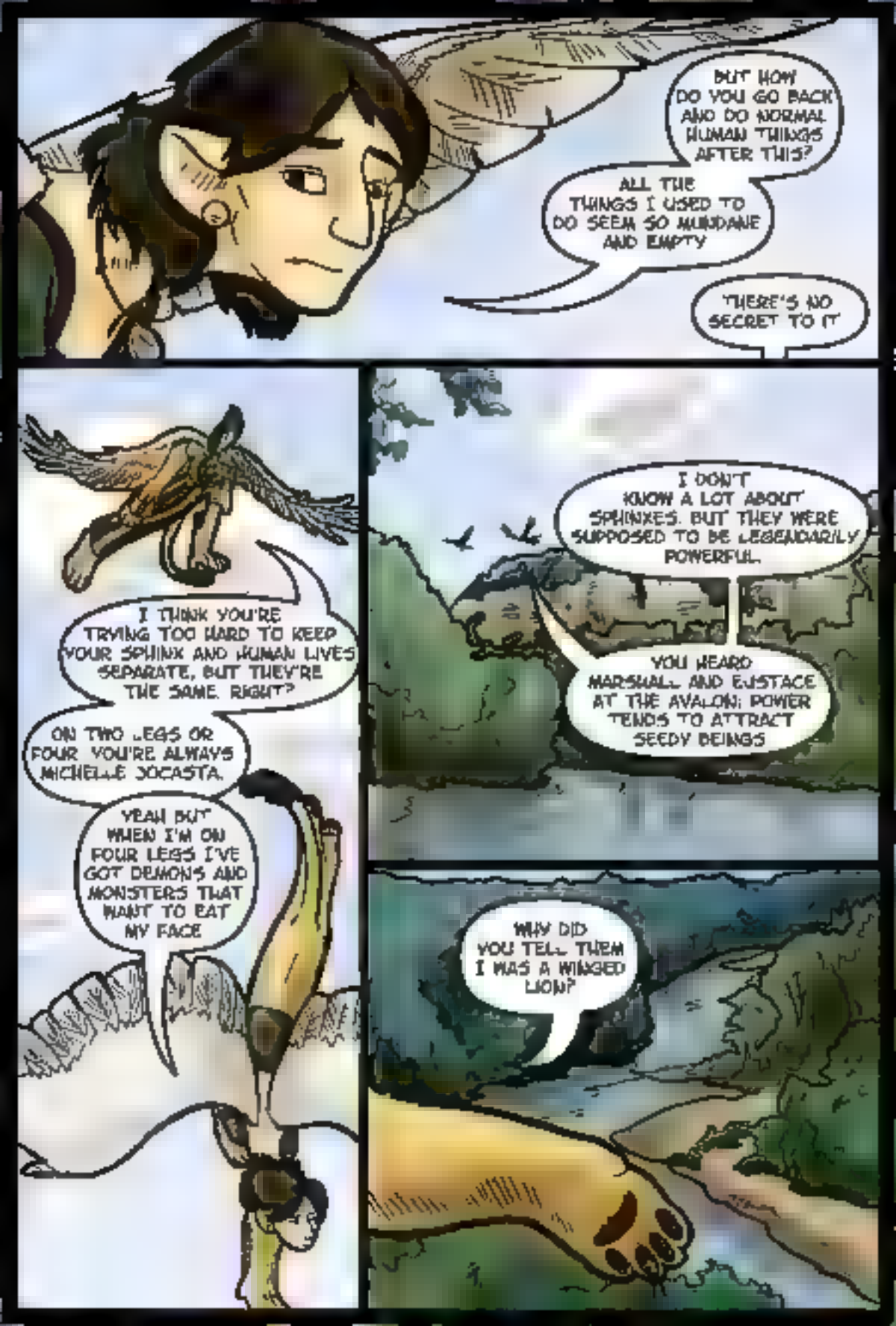
MAYBE THE WHOLE THING WAS A FLUKE?
CAUGHT THE MOMO IN A BAD MOOD?
I RAN INTO A DEMON DOWN IN ARKANSAS A FEW WEEKS BACK.
SEEMED TO BE IN QUITE A TIZZY OVER SOMETHIN'.
MENTIONED SOME NONSENSE ABOUT LOSIN' SOMETHING OR SOMEONE VALUABLE...
I DON'T SEE HOW THAT WOULD CORRELATE, THOUGH.
I MEAN YOU GUYS DIDN'T MANAGE TO STEAL DOWN INTO THE CITY OF DIS AND GRAB ANYTHING SPECIAL, RIGHT?
I WOULD JUST LIKE TO KNOW A LITTLE MORE ABOUT WHY A BIG SMELLY MONSTER WANTED TO EAT OUR FACES
WELL I'M STUMPED
MAYBE Y'JUST RAN ACROSS THEM WHILE THEY WERE DOIN' SOMETHIN ELSE, YOU KNOW?
WRONG PLACE, WRONG TIME?
WELL IS THERE ANYTHING WE COULD DO TO PROTECT OURSELVES IF SOMETHING LIKE THIS HAPPENS AGAIN?

NOTHIN' SPECIFIC
GOT ME A FEW CHARMS HERE THAT'LL WARD OFF BAD FORTUNE, THOUGH.
THAT MIGHT KEEP A FEW OF THE UNSAVORIES OFFA YOU, AT LEAST
THESE HERE EARRINGS ARE THE STRONGEST I GOT AT THE MOMENT
THEY'RE ACTUALLY PLUGS, BUT I MADE 'EM INTO EARRINGS SEEIN' AS MOST FOLKS 'ROUND HERE DON'T STRETCH OUT THEIR EARS MUCH.
CAN'T GUARANTEE YER SAFTEY, BUT A LITTLE EXTRA LUCK NEVER HURT NO ONE
THEY'RE FILLED WITH YOUR STANDARD ANTI-EVIL STUFF.
WOLFSBANE, WHITE OAK, SILVER, HOLY WATER, IRON, ALL THAT STUFF
D'YOU HAVE YOUR EARS PIERCED 'SHELLE?
SINCE KINDERGARTEN, WHY?
WE'LL TAKE THEM!
WHAT? JIM I CAN'T AFFORD FANCY MAGIC EARRINGS!

OLD TOSH I'M BUYIN'
WHAT? JIM, NO I CAN'T ACCEPT-
THINK OF THEM AS INSURANCE SO I DONT GET MY GORGEOUS ORANGE ARSE HANDED TO ME AGAIN, RIGHT?
BUT...
NO BUTS! WEAR THEM!
WE DONE HERE, MATES?
OH, WAIT A SEC, I WANT TO GET THIS BOOK.
THANKS FOR HELPIN' US OUT, EUSTACE. NICE MEETING YOU, MARSHALL.
THANK Y'KINDLY FER STOPPIN' BY, MR. FINN
HEH.


LATER THAT WEEK.
SYNESTHESIA IS AN UNUSUAL AND UNIQUE NEUROLOGICAL PHENOMENON WHERE AN INDIVIDUAL'S SENSES ARE ESSENTIALLY CROSSED
WHAT THAT MEANS IS THAT ONE SENSE WILL TRIGGER ANOTHER SEEMINGLY UNRELATED SENSE. SOUNDS RESULT IN INVOLUNTARILY SEEING COLORS, FOR EXAMPLE.
IN GRAPHEME-COLOR SYNESTHESIA, LETTERS HAVE SPECIFIC COLORS AND TINTS
IN LEXICAL-GUSTATORY SYNESTHESIA, WORDS TRIGGER SPECIFIC TASTES IN THE MOUTH. IN PERSONIFICATION, WORDS AND LETTERS TAKE ON PERSONALITIES OF THEIR OWN
THESE LAST TWO ARE VERY RARE OF COURSE, AND HARD TO RESEARCH BLAH
SATURDAY AFTERNOON
YEAH, JUST LIKE THAT SEE, MICHELLE? NOT NEARLY AS HARD AS IT LOOKS, RIGHT?
YOU'RE POSITIVE NOBODY CAN SEE US UP HERE?

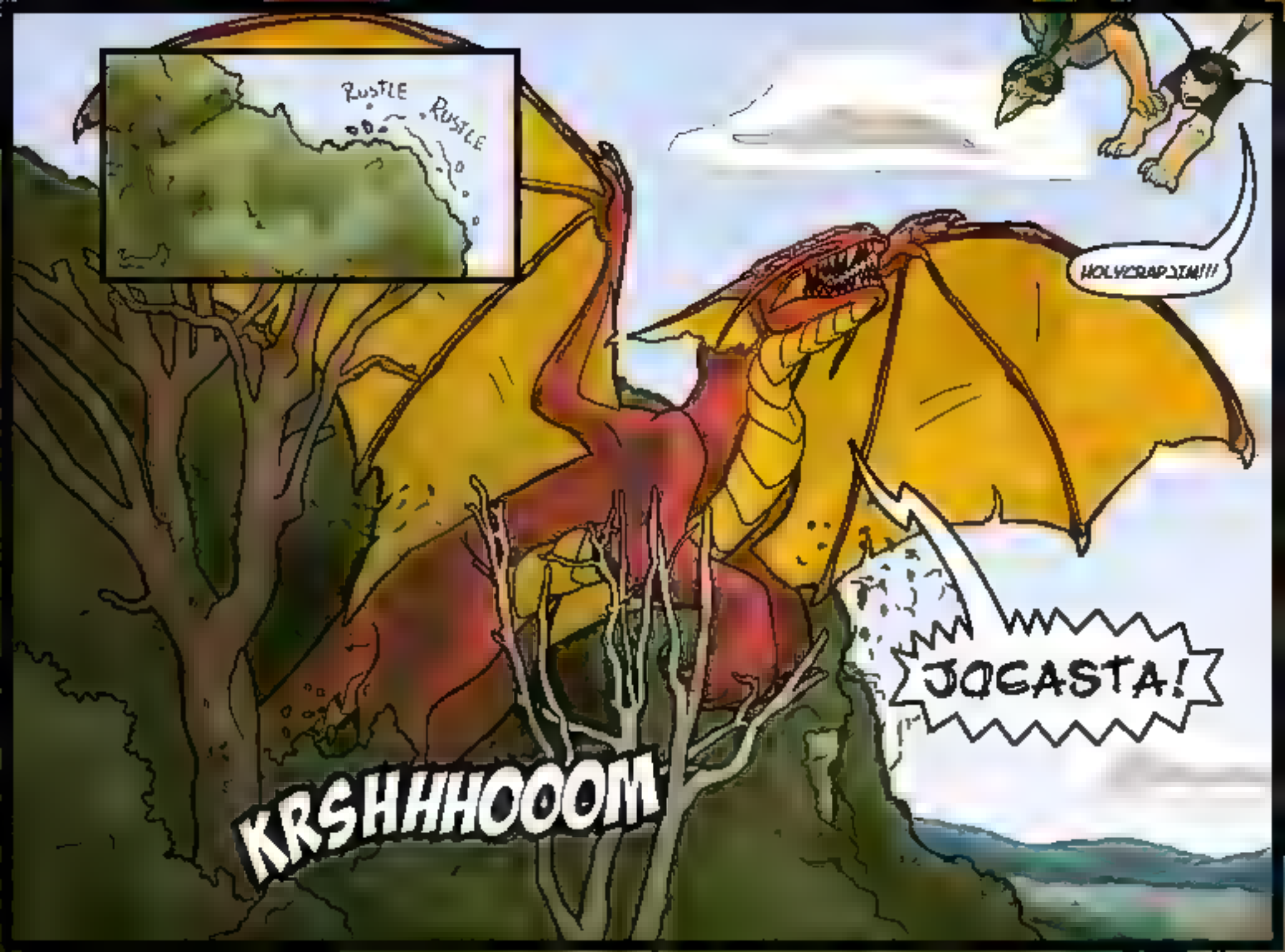
ABSOLUTELY POSITIVE, LUV. DON'T WORRY
I'VE BEEN FLYING SINCE I WAS ELEVEN YEARS OLD AND I DON'T THINK I'LL EVER GET TIRED OF IT
GREG AND MERIAL HAVE BEEN HAUNTING THIS VALLEY FOR YEARS AND THEY HAVEN'T BEEN CAUGHT YET
CAREFUL OF THIS UPDRAFT
I CANT BELIEVE HOW HIGH UP WE ARE
THIS IS THE ONLY ASPECT OF THIS WHOLE ORDEAL THAT I ENJOY I DON'T UNDERSTAND HOW EVERYBODY ACTS SO NORMAL ABOUT ALL THIS MONSTER-MAGIC STUFF
AH. I SEE IT'S MY TURN FOR THIS "NORMAL" TALK OF YOURS.
"NORMAL" DEPENDS ON YOUR DEFINITION, MICHELLE. I WAS BORN THIS WAY. I HATCHED FROM AN EGG. ME BEST FRIEND IS A LION, I USED TO DATE A PEGASUS.
AM I MAKING MY POINT HERE?
I GUESS?
IT'S NORMAL, MICHELLE! IT'S ALL NORMAL!


BUT HOW DO YOU GO BACK AND DO NORMAL HUMAN THINGS AFTER THIS?
ALL THE THINGS I USED TO DO SEEM SO MUNDANE AND EMPTY
THERE'S NO SECRET TO IT
I THINK YOU'RE TRYING TOO HARD TO KEEP YOUR SPHINX AND HUMAN LIVES SEPARATE, BUT THEY'RE THE SAME. RIGHT?
ON TWO LEGS OR FOUR YOU'RE ALWAYS MICHELLE JOCASTA.
YEAH BUT WHEN I'M ON FOUR LEGS I'VE GOT DEMONS AND MONSTERS THAT WANT TO EAT MY FACE
I DON'T KNOW A LOT ABOUT SPHINXES. BUT THEY WERE SUPPOSED TO BE LEGENDARILY POWERFUL.
YOU HEARD MARSHALL AND EUSTACE AT THE AVALON: POWER TENDS TO ATTRACT SEEDY BEINGS
WHY DID YOU TELL THEM I WAS A WINGED LION?

FLYIN' LIONS AND SPHINXES ARE CLOSE ENOUGH PHYSICALLY THAT I THOUGHT I COULD BLUFF IT AND HE'D BELIEVE ME.
BUT WHY LIE AT ALL? MAYBE THEY COULD'VE HELPED US.
THE REVIVAL OF AN EXTINCT RACE MIGHT RAISE A FEW EYEBROWS. I FIGURE WE SHOULD FIND OUT AS MUCH AS WE CAN BEFORE NEWS GETS OUT
BEFORE THE NEWS GETS OUT?
EVERYBODY KNOWS ABOUT THE GREAT WAR, MICHELLE. WHEN WORD IS OUT THAT A SPHINX SURVIVED AFTER ALL THESE YEARS IT'S GONNA BE A BIG THING.
AUGH!
I DON'T WANT ANY OF THIS, JIM! I DIDN'T ASK TO BE THE LONE SURVIVOR OF SOME CENTURIES OLD WAR OR TO ATTRACT DEMONS AND MONSTERS!
IT'S NOT FAIR!
GOD, WOULD YOU LIKE SOME CHEESE WITH ALL YOUR WHINE?
WHAT?
YOU'RE NOT THE ONLY PERSON WITH UNFAIR PROBLEMS, MICHELLE.

YOU MIGHT NOT HAVE NOTICED, BUT GREG LOATHES SATYRS, BUT EVEN AS A HUMAN HE CAN'T HIDE THAT HE IS ONE.
WHY DOES GREG HATE SA-
IF YOU'D STOP WHINING ABOUT YOUR OWN PROBLEMS FOR FOUR MINUTES YOU MIGHT FIND OUT
MERIAL LOVES BEING A NIXIE, BUT HER PARENTS ARE TERRIFIED OF HER. THE SHOCK OF FINDING OUT IS THE CAUSE OF HER FATHER'S HEALTH PROBLEMS.
SHE DIDN'T MENTION ANYTHING ABOUT THAT-
DID YOU EVER STOP TO ASK WHY HER FAMILY MOVED TO MISSOURI FROM SAN FRANCISCO?
I'VE HAD TO LIVE WITH BEING POINTED AND GAWKED AT FOR YEARS 'CAUSE OF THE WAY I LOOK.
GREEN HAIR ISN'T NORMAL FOR GRYPHONS?
IT'S PART OF A FAMILY CURSE OR SOME-THING THAT CROPS UP EVERY ONCE IN AWHILE. I GREW TWO FEET TALLER AND THREE FEET OF HAIR OVERNIGHT ON MY 16TH BIRTHDAY. GROWS BACK WHEN I CUT IT, TOO.
REALLY? HOW DO YOU DEAL WITH THAT?
WELL THERE'S NOTHING I CAN DO ABOUT IT, SO WHY WORRY, RIGHT?

STAYING HUMAN THE REST OF YOUR LIFE IS AN OPTION, BUT YOU'LL NEVER BE THE PERSON YOU WERE BEFORE YOU TURNED.
AND IT'S NOT LIKE YOU'RE ALONE, MATE. NONE OF US ARE GONNA DITCH YOU IF SOMETHING BAD HAPPENS TO YA
REALLY?
DO I HAVE TO SIDE-TACKLE ANOTHER BIGFOOT TO GET YOU TO BELIEVE ME?
THANKS, JIM. THAT MAKES ME FEEL A LITTLE [illegible].
ANYTHING TO STOP YOUR INCESSANT COMPLAINING. LUV
NOW, YOU WANT TO LEARN HOW TO DIVE?
DIVE? JIM I DON'T THINK I'M READY FOR THA
-GRAB!
AAAA


RUSTLE
RUSTLE
HOLYCRAPJIM!!!
JOCASTA!
KRSHHHOOOM

JIM! JIM HELP!
AHH! AHH! JIM DO SOMETHING! AHH!
QUIET, BEAST.
JIM! JIM! JIM! JIM HELP!
THAT'S. THAT'S A DRAGON.
JIM!
THAT'S A BLEEDIN' DRAGON!
MICHELLE!
TO BE CONCLUDED!

skin deep

Orientations Part IV

NEXT UP: Holy cow guys this arc is over!
Stay tuned for a short comic starring Greg and Merial.
And then a HALLOWEEN STORY
Watch out! 'Fiddler's Cave' starts Tuesday, August 19th!

skin deep

Orientations Part V

MICHELLE!
JIM!
JIM HELP!
I'M COMING, HOLD ON!
AARG!
RAAAWR!
INSOLENT BEAST!

THIS IS NOT YOUR CONCERN, FINN!
BOLLOCKS!
LEAVE NOW AND NO HARM WILL BEFALL YOU!
LET HER GO!
CAW
CAW
CAW
CAW
CAW
GAH!
GET HER OUT OF HERE NOW!
CAW
CAW
CAW
MARSHALL!?
DO IT QUICKLY!

CAW
CAW
FLEE WHILE HE'S DISTRACTED!
ARRRRG!
SHUNK!
COME BACK HERE!
HORRIBLE WENCH!
YOINK!
HURK!

ENOUGH OF THIS!
OFF WITH YOU!
GAH!
MICHELLE!
PAFF
WOMPH!
BLOODY SODDING HELL!
MARSHALL?
MICHELLE?
MICHELLE!?!

HOW THE HELL DID I LOSE THEM?
JIM! MICHELLE! HELP!
MERIAL?
JIM! MICHELLE! WHERE ARE YOU GUYS!?
HURRY!
THE MOMO'S BACK!

MICHELLE, C'MON, WHERE ARE YOU?
JIM! MICHELLE! IT'S GOT GREG! HELP! HURRY!
HANG ON, MERIAL!
SORRY, MICHELLE.
TSEEOAWR!
ERT?
OOF!
SPLASH!
WHERE'S HE GOING?
I DON'T KNOW!

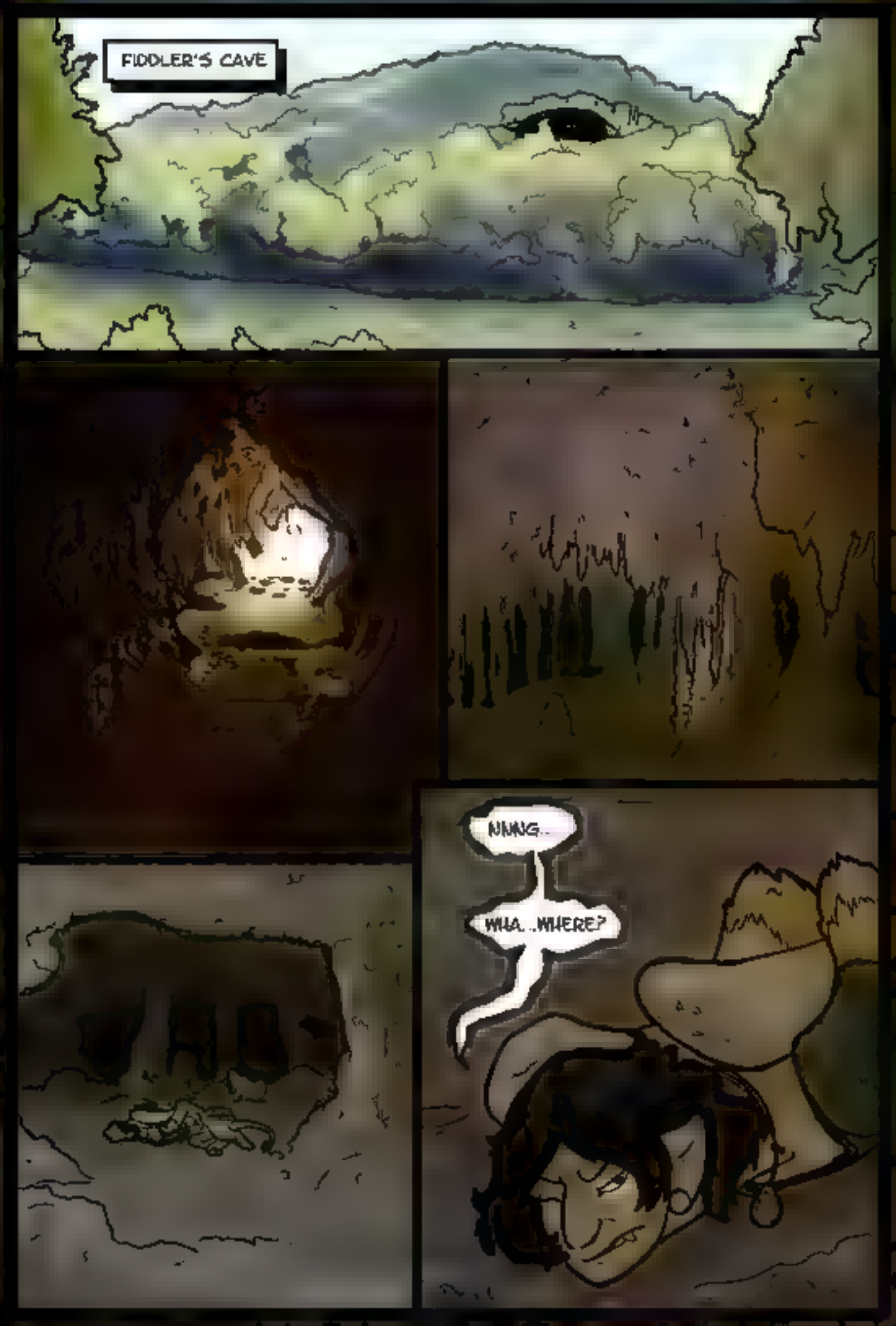
HE WAS FULL-ON ATTACKING US UNTIL YOU SHOWED UP!
WHAT'S HE DOING NOW?
WHAT'S HE WAITING FOR?
AND WHAT THE HELL IS THAT ON YOUR SHOULDER?
YOU RUBES DON'T EVEN RECOGNIZE ME?
EUSTACE WAS RIGHT TO WANT TO FOLLOW YOU FOUR.
CLUELESS AS A SACK OF TOADS, THE LOT OF YOU!
MARSHALL! WHAT'S GOING ON? WHY ARE WE BEING ATTACKED?
MARVELOUS DISTRACTIONS, ONE AND ALL!
YA'LL PLAYED YOUR PARTS PERFECTLY!
MY BROTHERS AND I THANK YOU!

WHO ARE YOU!? WHAT DO YOU WANT?
OH I'M NOBODY SPECIAL. ME AND MY PAL OVER HERE JUST NEED TO DISTRACT YOU A LITTLE BIT LONGER.
DISTRACT US FROM WHAT!?
WHAT DID WE EVER DO TO YOU? WHAT DO YOU WANT WITH US?
YOU KNOW I'D REALLY LOVE TO TELL YA BUT I GOTTA SPLIT
TOODLES!
NO! COME BACK HERE!
COUGH
COUGH
DEMONS!
THAT WAS A FREAKIN' DEMON!
CAFF
CAFF
COUGH
GALDANG THAT SMELLS LIKE ROTTEN TUNA FISH BURNT HAIR DOG VOMIT

WAIT, WHERE'S MICHELLE?
OH HELL, WITH ALL THE COMMOTION I FORGOT! SODDING HELL!
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
A DRAGON TOOK HER!
A WHAT!?
A BLOODY GREAT DRAGON! IT CAME OUT OF NOWHERE AND GRABBED HER!
AND YOU JUST LEFT HER?
I LOST THEM IN A CLOUD BANK AND THEN YOU GUYS CALLED FOR HELP!
WE HAVE TO GET HER!
I DON'T KNOW WHERE THEY WENT! THEY DISAPPEARED INTO NOTHING!
EUSTACE WAS RIGHT TO WANT TO FOLLOW YOU GUYS. YOUR "WINGED LION" STORY REEKED OF BULLCRAP
OH PLEASE, BOY, DRAGONS DON'T DISAPPEAR, HE THREW A SIMPLE GLAMOUR IS ALL
GRADE F MAGIC, TOO. REAL LOUSY I SAW THROUGH IT AND FOLLOWED HIM. I THOUGHT YOU SAW IT TOO SO I DIDN'T WAIT FOR YOU.
THAT GIRL'S TURNIN' WAS MIGHTY POWERFUL. ANYONE WITH A NOSE F MAGIC FROM OKLAHOMA TO ARKANSAS HAD TO'VE FELT IT
EUSTACE AND I ARE MYSTICAL INDIAN SPIRIT ANIMALS, BOY, GIVE US SOME CREDIT FOR BEING ABLE TO SEE TUROUGH A HALF-ASSED LIE.

HOW COULD THIS HAPPEN? DRAGONS ARE EXTINCT!
AS EXTINCT AS THE SPHINXES, APPARENTLY
MARSHALL, YOU SAID YOU FOLLOWED THEM? DID YOU SEE WHERE THEY WENT?
I SAW TH'GENERAL DIRECTION HE WAS HEADIN', YES.
BUT I DIDN'T NEED TO FOLLOW HIM; WE KNOW WHERE HE'S HID.
THERE'S A SMALL CAVE UP ON A CLIFF OFF YONDER
ME AN' EUSTACE SEEN HIM COME OUT OF THERE BEFORE RUNNING INTO JIM AND THE SPHINX
HE STAYED BEHIND TO GIVE IT A LOOK OVER WHILE I FOLLOWED THE DRAGON HE SHOULD STILL BE IN THERE
WAIT, A CAVE ON A CLIFF?
FIDDLER'S CAVE?

THAT'S THE ONE
THE PLACE IS A DAMN LABYRINTH. THOUGH. A BUGBEAR ARMED WITH A MAP AND A PRAYER WOULD STILL HAVE TROUBLE NAVIGATING THE CAVERNS
WHAT ARE WE WAITING FOR!? WE KNOW WHERE THEY ARE, LET'S GO!
GREG WAIT!
WHAT!?
HOW ARE WE SUPPOSED TO FIGHT A DRAGON? OR DEMONS?
WE ARE IN WAY OVER OUR HEADS HERE!
SO WHAT? WE JUST LET THAT THING TAKE MICHELLE?
THAT'S TOTAL BULLCRAP! WE HAVE TO DO SOMETHING!
SIGH
SOMEONE NEEDS TO HELP HER!
LET ME PUT SOME CLOTHES ON
SEE, IF YOU WOULD JUST WEAR THEM IN THE FIRST PLACE...
YOU SWIM AROUND IN WET FABRIC AND TELL ME HOW THAT WORKS OUT FOR YOU.
I SWEAR TO GOD, IF WE DIE, I WILL NEVER FORGIVE MYSELF


FIDDLER'S CAVE
NNNG..
WHA..WHERE?

OH WHAT FRESH HELL...?
THUMP
THUMP
THUMP
THUMP
PLEASE DO NOT TRY TO ESCAPE.

WHO ARE YOU!? WHAT DO YOU WANT WITH ME?
I AM THE BLOODCARVER.
I AM SORRY
I WILL TRY TO MAKE YOUR IMPRISONMENT AS COMFORTABLE AS POSSIBLE
I AM NOT AN EVIL PERSON.
IMPRISONMENT!? WHAT DID I EVER TO DO YOU!?
YOU WILL NOT ASK QUESTIONS.
I WILL RETURN WHEN WE ARE READY TO LEAVE.
WHAT? NO COME BACK!

NO! PLEASE COME BACK!
WELL SHAVE ME BALD...
YOU ARE A SPHINX!
EUSTACE!?
WHERE AM I?
HOW DID YOU FIND ME?
WHAT DOES THAT DRAGON WANT FROM ME?
JIM SAID DRAGONS WERE EXTINCT!!
EXTINCT AS THE SPHINXES, OR SO THE SAYING GOES
LET'S GET YOU OUT OF HERE BEFORE HE GETS BACK
HOLD STILL.
WHY DIDN'T YOU TRY TURNING HUMAN TO GET OUT OF THE ROPES?
THAT WOULD HAVE WORKED?
PROBABLY NOT

RRRRRRRR....
YES!
SNAP!
HOPEFULLY THAT WILL WORK BETTER THAN THESE EARRINGS
WE'RE ESCAPING AREN'T WE? THAT'S PRETTY DAMN LUCKY
NOW HURRY, B'FORE YOUR BIG RED FRIEND GET'S BACK
BUT WON'T HE JUST COME AFTER ME AGAIN?
MARSHALL AND I WILL TRY TO COOK SOMETHIN' UP TO PROTECT YOU
LUCKY WOULD BE WINNING THE LOTTO, NOT FLEEING FOR MY LI~
SHH DO YOU HEAR THAT?
YOU ARE WASTING YOUR TIME
BUT MY BROTHERS AND I..
IS THERE SOMEONE WITH HIM?
HUSH!
OUT OF THE QUESTION, AZREAL

I'M UNDER DIRECT ORDERS FROM THE FATHER TO DELIVER THE SPHINX TO HIM PERSONALLY
WE WEEDED HER OUT FOR YOU, WE HAD A DEAL!
I MADE NO SUCH DEAL, YOU ACTED ENTIRELY ON YOUR OWN.
I CAUGHT HER WITHOUT YOUR HELP
MY ASS!
MY BROTHERS AND I ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR FINDING HER IN THE FIRST PLACE! OUR MISTRESS DEMANDS THAT WE TAKE THE BEAST TO HER!
YOU CAN HAVE THE SPHINX AFTER DARKLORD IS DONE WITH HER
OUT OF THE QUESTION.
I HAVE NOT LIVED THIS LONG TO BE BULLIED BY DEMONS.
WE WORKED HARD TO FIND HER FOR YOU! COME ON, BIG GUY, WE CAN'T GO BACK TO THE MISTRESS EMPTY HANDED.
WE KILLED ONE OF HER FAVORITE PETS FOR THIS!
AND THE SHADE OF THE GIRL'S FATHER, THE BASTARD THAT STARTED THIS WHOLE MESS, IS STILL ROAMING AROUND OUT THERE THWARTING OUR CAPTURE!
HOW ARE WE GONNA LOOK IF WE RETURN TO THE MISTRESS WITH NOTHING BUT AN UNDEAD BIGFOOT TO SHOW?

I COULD CARE LESS.
UNLESS YOU HAVE A DIRECT ORDER FROM THE FATHER HIMSELF SAYING OTHERWISE THIS GIRL COMES WITH ME.
DID THAT DEMON SAY SOMETHING ABOUT MY DAD?
SHHH!
C'MON, BLOODCARVER.
WE'RE FRIENDS, AREN'T WE?
WE CAN STRIKE A DEAL HERE, RIGHT?
AZREAL, YOU AND YOUR BROTHERS HAVE ALWAYS BEEN ALLIES TO OUR CAUSE, BUT I CANNOT IGNORE AN ORDER FROM THE FATHER.
I AM TO TAKE THE BEAST WITH ME, AND THAT'S FINAL.
YOU DO NOT WANT US AS ENEMIES, DRAGON
YOUR FATHER CAN HAVE THE SPHINX AFTER SHE COMES TO DIS WITH US!
NOBODY'S TAKING ME ANYWHERE!

I HAVEN'T DONE ANYTHING TO DESERVE ANY OF THIS!
JUST LEAVE ME ALONE!
WHAT ARE YOU DOIN'?
SHUT UP, MONSTER! YOU AND YOURS HAVE BEEN NOTHING BUT A PAIN IN MY ASS!
THE SOONER I COMPLETE THIS STUPID MISSION THE BETTER. YOU'RE COMING WITH ME. NOW
SO NO MORE SCREWING AROUND!
MIKHAIL!
DAMIEN!
TAKE HER TO THE MISTRESS AT ONCE.
DO WHAT YOU WANT WITH THE SKIN-WALKER
RUN, GIRL, I'LL DISTRACT 'EM!
NO! GO AWAY!
DON'T COME NEAR ME!

I'M NOT GOING ANYWHERE!
FWASHH!!
SORRY JUST DON'T WANNA
FLUMP

DAMIEN?
MIKE?
SHE SEEMS TO HAVE SENT YOUR BROTHERS BACK TO DIS, AZREAL.
DO NOT THINK YOU'VE WON, BLOODCARVER
SHWAAFF
AS SOON AS I FIND MY BROTHERS WE WILL BE BACK FOR HER.
TSSS
WE WILL BE BACK
POKE

HOW MUCH FURTHER IS THIS STUPID CAVE?
WE'RE ALMOST THERE, JIM. QUIT WHINING
WE'D BE THERE ALREADY IF WE HAD FLOWN
AND BECOME A GIANT FLYING TARGET FOR THAT DRAGON?
SHH! DO YOU GUYS HEAR THAT?
WHAT'S THAT?
KERSHOOM
OH HOLY CRAP!
THERE HE IS!
DOES HE HAVE MICHELLE WITH HIM?
WHERE'S HE GOING?
HE'S LANDING!
FOLLOW HIM!

MICHELLE!
GET AWAY FROM HER!
MICHELLE! MICHELLE ARE YOU OKAY?
I AM SORRY
SHE'S ALRIGHT. SHE JUST FAINTED IS ALL.

GREG!
EUSTACE!
IS MICHELLE ALRIGHT?
GREG?
SHE'S KIND OF OUT OF IT
YOU SMELL LIKE GRASS.
MICHELLE! MICHELLE ARE YOU OKAY?
GREG SMELLS LIKE GRASS
O!
WE'LL KEEP UP WITH HIM!
YA'LL GET HER OUT OF HERE!
HE'S GETTIN AWAY!
WHAT DO WE DO?

WHAT MADE YOU DO THAT?
SHE WAS AN INNOCENT
I SAW IT IN HER EYES AND HEARD IT IN HER VOICE.
BUT SHE'S A SPHINX
ANNOYING, TOO.
ALL SHE EVER DOES IS WHINE AND COMPLAIN.
SHE GOT ON MY NERVES.
SHE IS YOUNG AND FRIGHTENED
DO YOU REMEMBER WHAT IT IS LIKE TO BE YOUNG?
NO, OF COURSE YOU DON'T
I REMEMBER, IT WAS LONG AGO BUT I REMEMBER.
SHE IS JUST DISTRESSED, SHE WILL GROW OUT OF IT IN TIME.
YEAH, WHATEVER.

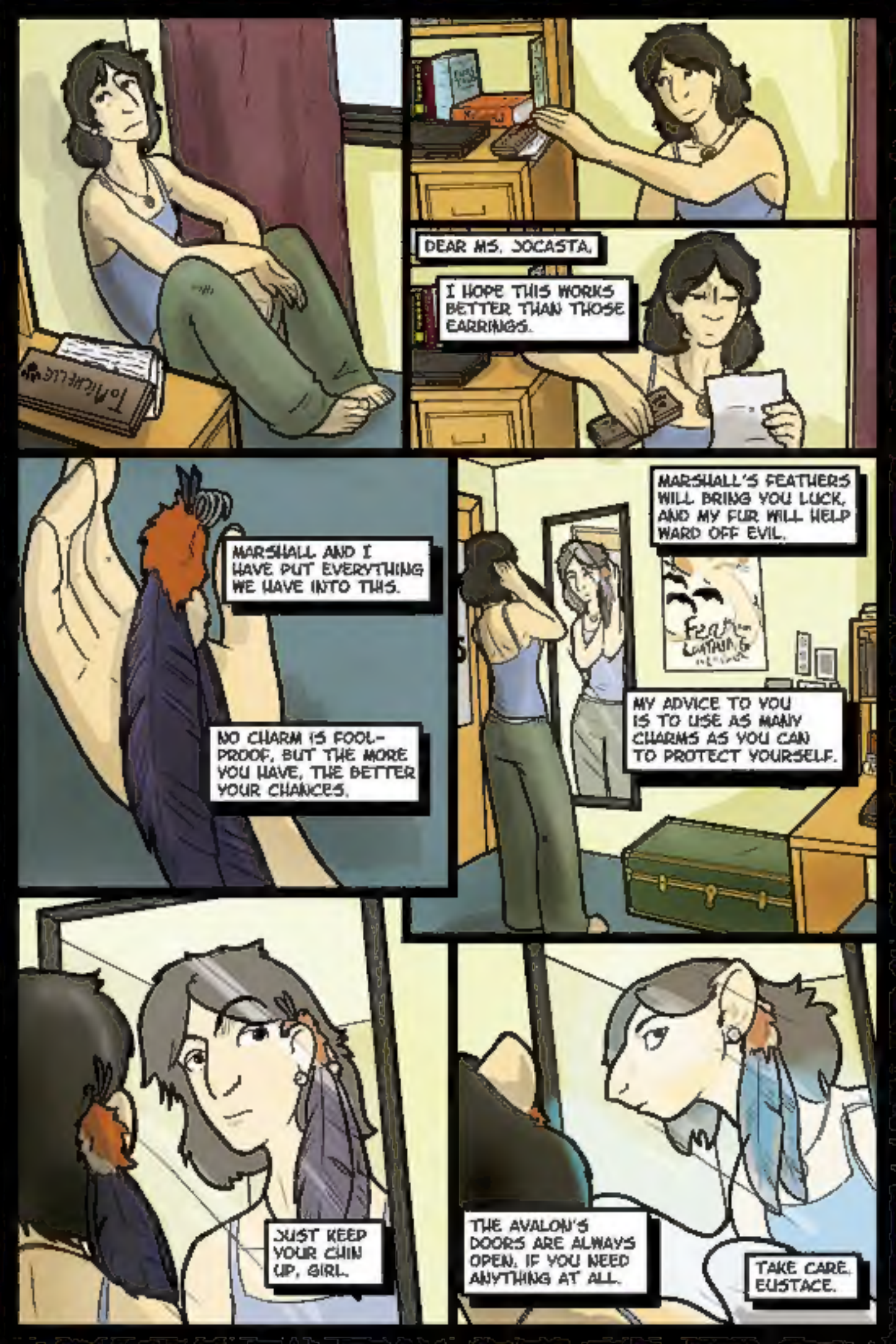
I AM OLD AND I AM TIRED OF THE PAST
SPHINXES HAVE BEEN GONE AS LONG AS I HAVE LIVED AND OUR WAY OF LIFE HAS NOT GOTTEN ANY BETTER
PERHAPS A CHANGE IS DUE.
OR PERHAPS I WAS NOT THE RIGHT ONE FOR THE JOB
YOU WOULD HAVE STOPPED ME ANYWAY, ANGEL.
OH I WAS ABOUT TO, BUT YOU KNOW HOW MUCH I HATE PLAYING THE DEUS EX MACHINA.
OH BECAUSE I JUST LOVE YOUR COMPANY SO MUCH, YOU BIG SACK OF HAPPINESS AND RAINBOWS.
THAT LITTLE FOX SPIRIT TOOK CARE OF IT FOR ME, ANYWAY
WHY ARE YOU HERE, GABE?
HOLD ON A SECOND, RED.
AZREAL!
CLK
CLK

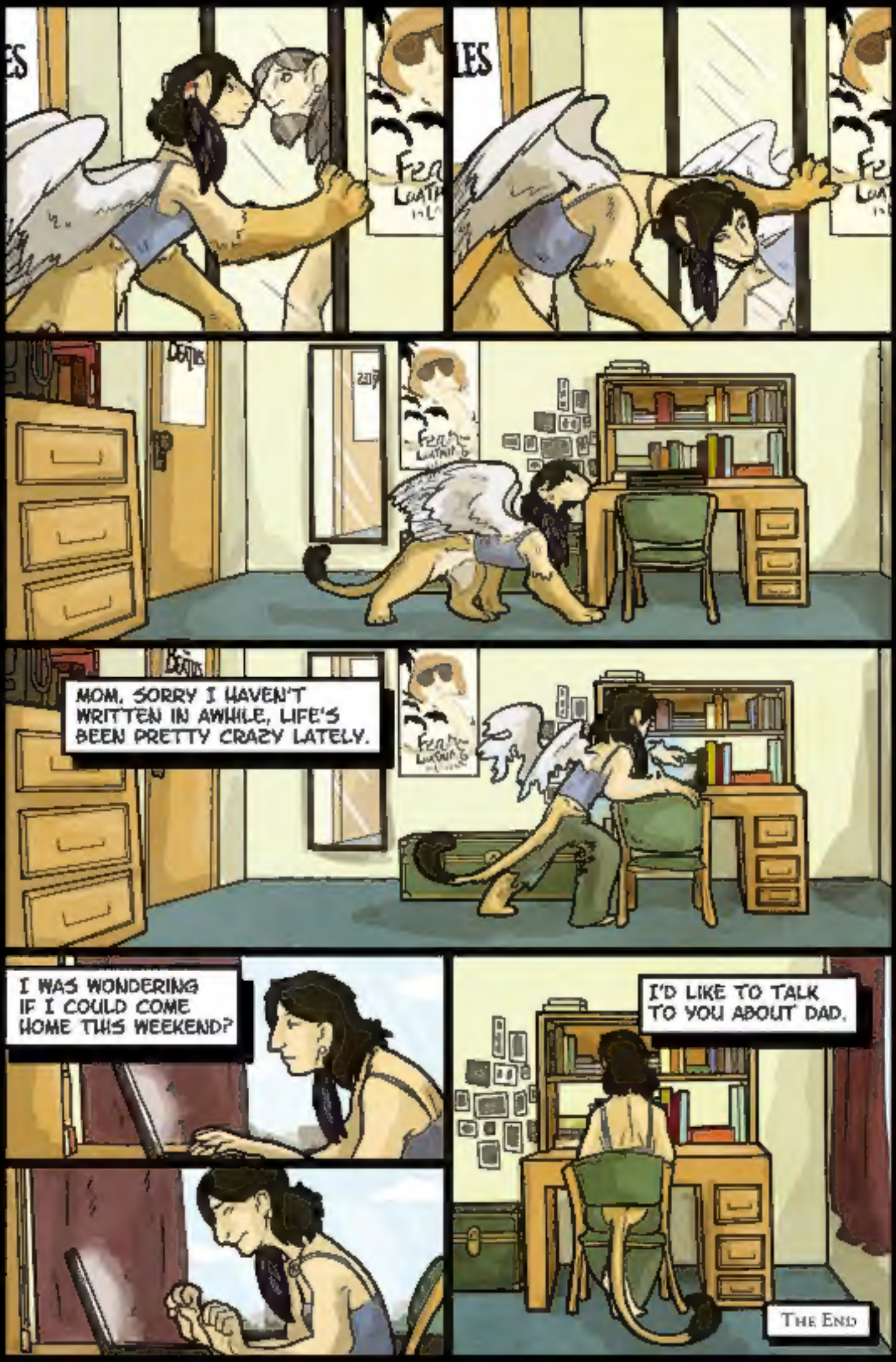
WHAT, GABE?
YOU WANT TO RUB OUR FACES IN OUR FAILURE?
FOUND YOUR LOST SHADE.
THIS IS WHAT DARKLORD SENT YOU UP HERE TO FETCH, ISN'T IT?
I'M SURE YOU DON'T WANT TO GO BACK EMPTY HANDED
WE DID A SWELL JOB OF CAUSING PLENTY OF TROUBLE WHILE YOU THREE TRIED SO HARD TO FIND HIM.
KEEP A BETTER EYE ON THE SHADES IN LIMBO, WILL YOU? I DON'T WANT TO DO THIS AGAIN
YEAH, YEAH, 'MICHELLE, MA BELLE' BLAH BLAH BLAH BLAH BLAH.

THANKS...
WHAT, MIKE?
UP FOR POKER WITH US THIS FRIDAY, GABE?
YOU SUPPLY THE BOURBON AND I'LL TRY NOT TO BRING DOWN MY HOLY WRATH UPON THEE
I DIDN'T KNOW YOU WERE FRIENDS WITH THE GRIMM BROTHERS.
I LIKE POKER

I DO NOT KNOW HOW I WILL FACE THE FATHER WITH THIS FAILURE.
WELL YOU DO KEEP SAYING HOW MUCH YOU NEED A CHANGE IN YOUR LIFE.
I MEANT SOMETHING LIKE TAKING A VACATION WITH MY WIFE, NOT COMMITTING HIGH TREASON.
I'M HIS SECOND, ANGEL. THE FATHER WILL NOT TAKE THIS LIGHTLY.
I SPARED THE GIRL TODAY, BUT WHAT WILL SHE HAVE TO ENDURE TOMORROW?
I HAVE THROWN MY LIFE AWAY, FOR WHAT?
WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO ME?
YOU DID THE RIGHT THING, AND THAT'S WHAT COUNTS IN THE END, OR WHATEVER THE CLICHÉ IS.
THE FATHER WILL SEND OTHERS, AND THE DEMONS WILL BE BACK, BUT SHE'LL HAVE A FIGHTING CHANCE THIS TIME
C'MON, YOU SADSACK, LET'S GET YOU BACK TO THE CATACOMBS.
I NEED TO GET DRUNK.

FRIDAY
SHE'S NOT COMING WITH US TO THE CABIN THIS WEEKEND.
IS SHE ALRIGHT? WE HAVEN'T SEEN HER ALL WEEK.
SHE'S NOT THINKIN' OF DITCHIN' US, IS SHE?
WELL, AFTER ALL SHE'S BEEN THROUGH I WOULDN'T BLAME HER IF SHE DID.
I THINK SHE'S GONNA BE OKAY.
SHE HASN'T SAID 'BOO' IN THE PAST FEW DAYS, BUT SHE'S NOT MOPING AROUND THE ROOM LIKE BEFORE.
I GUESS SHE JUST NEEDS TO FIGURE OUT WHAT SHE WANTS TO DO ABOUT ALL THIS.
I DON'T KNOW.
SHE KNOWS WE'RE HERE. I GUESS THAT'S ALL WE CAN DO AT THIS POINT.
C'MON, GREG.
YEAH, I KNOW.


DEAR MS. JOCASTA,
I HOPE THIS WORKS BETTER THAN THOSE EARRINGS.
MARSHALL AND I HAVE PUT EVERYTHING WE HAVE INTO THIS.
NO CHARM IS FOOL-PROOF, BUT THE MORE YOU HAVE, THE BETTER YOUR CHANCES.
MARSHALL'S FEATHERS WILL BRING YOU LUCK, AND MY FUR WILL HELP WARD OFF EVIL.
MY ADVICE TO YOU IS TO USE AS MANY CHARMS AS YOU CAN TO PROTECT YOURSELF.
JUST KEEP YOUR CHIN UP, GIRL.
THE AVALON'S DOORS ARE ALWAYS OPEN. IF YOU NEED ANYTHING AT ALL.
TAKE CARE, EUSTACE.


MOM, SORRY I HAVEN'T WRITTEN IN AWHILE, LIFE'S BEEN PRETTY CRAZY LATELY.
I WAS WONDERING IF I COULD COME HOME THIS WEEKEND?
I'D LIKE TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT DAD.
THE END